City of Elkins
Comprehensive Plan

Draft March 2026

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Picture credits– City of Elkins Facebook page, Planning Commission Members, and WVU Land Use Clinic.

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Introduction

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

The City of Elkins developed its first comprehensive plan in 2015. For the past ten years, local elected officials have relied on the comprehensive plan to guide development and planning in Elkins. Officials use the plan to guide decisions about city budgeting, zoning, and the planning of community facilities. Under West Virginia Code Chapter 8A, comprehensive plans must be updated every ten years. This comprehensive plan update evaluates the vision, goals, objectives, and action steps outlined in the 2015 plan and revises them as needed. It also provides a detailed review of each action step to assess what the city has implemented, and the challenges encountered during implementation.

Just like people plan for everyday life and their future (vacations, large purchases, retirement), local governments should plan as well. Local governments are tasked with providing services to their residents, which is often not an easy task. Many local government services (recreation, transportation, community facilities) require planning, especially those that require money. To effectively plan for the future, a local government must have a comprehensive plan in place. This plan is considered "comprehensive" because it addresses all aspects of a community, including land use, transportation, housing, economic development, recreation, and community services. Having a comprehensive plan allows communities to make informed land use decisions, enhance residents' quality of life, and direct public investments to appropriate locations.

The comprehensive plan is a vital tool for enhancing residents' quality of life and guiding investment decisions for Elkins' future. It helps the community set short- and long-term financial priorities and supports efforts to secure grant funding for local development projects. Government agencies and nonprofit organizations often use comprehensive plans to understand the rationale behind proposed projects and funding requests. Because the plan is developed through a public input process, projects identified as priorities may be more competitive for grant funding. The comprehensive plan also serves as an important marketing tool for Elkins, as individuals and businesses considering relocation often review a community's future plans to understand local priorities. A strong, well-crafted plan can therefore help attract new residents and businesses to the city.

Chapter 8A: Land Use Planning

The West Virginia Code, Chapter 8A: Land Use Planning sets the rules and regulations that local governments must follow when participating in land use planning efforts. Chapter 8A gives local governments the authority to create a planning commission and board of zoning appeals, develop a comprehensive plan, subdivision and land development ordinance, zoning ordinance, and enact a voluntary farmland protection program, as well as to set procedures for methods of securities, appeals, and enforcement of ordinances. The Planning Commission is ultimately in charge of planning for the future in a community; therefore, the commission is tasked with preparing a Comprehensive Plan. The City of Elkins Planning Commission consists of seven (7) members that represent a wide range of interests within the city.

Land use planning requires several mandatory elements in a Comprehensive Plan. The tables below display the mandatory elements and where they can be found in the City of Elkins Comprehensive Plan.

Required Objectives for a Comprehensive Plan	
W. VA. Code §8A-3-4	
Code Provision	**Page #**
Statement of goals and objectives	13, 14, 15, 22, 23, 35, 36, 37, 38, 54, 55, 56, 72, 73, 75, 79
Timeline on how to meet short and long-term goals and objectives	81, 82, 83, 84, 85
Action plan with implementation strategies	13, 14, 15, 22, 23, 35, 36, 37, 38, 54, 55, 56, 72, 73, 74, 75, 79, 80,
Recommendations of a financial program for necessary public funding	81, Appendix 2
Statement of recommendations concerning future land use and development policies	66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 73, 81
A program to encourage regional planning, coordination, and cooperation	11, 15, 43, 44, 81, 83
Maps, plats, and/or charts that present basic information on the land, including present and future uses	59, 68, 71

Required Components for a Comprehensive Plan W. VA. Code §8A-3-4(c)	
Code Provision	**Page #**
Land Use	
Different land uses (including, for example, residential, agricultural, historic, conservation)	58, 59, 61, 62, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75
Population density and building intensity standards	23, 58, 66, 67
Growth or decline management	40
Projected population growth or decline	40
Constraints on development (including identifying flood-prone and subsidence areas)	51, 58, 60
Housing	
Analyze projected housing needs and different types of housing needed (including affordable housing and accessible housing for persons with disabilities)	19, 20, 23, 51
Identify the number of projected housing units and land needed	20, 21, 23, 70
Address substandard housing	17, 18, 19, 20, 23
Rehabilitate and improve existing housing	17, 18, 19, 20, 23
Adaptive reuse of buildings into housing	21
Transportation	
Vehicular, transit, air, port, railroad, river, and any other mode	26, 27, 28 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 73, 74
Movement of traffic and parking	26, 27, 33, 34, 37
Pedestrian and bicycle systems	28, 33, 34, 38, 73, 74
Intermodal transportation	32
Economic development	
Analyze opportunities, strengths and weaknesses	41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56
Identify and designate economic development sites and/or sectors	50, 51, 52, 55, 56, 69
Identify types of economic development sought	50, 51, 52, 55, 56
Miscellaneous Components	
Infrastructure	25, 26, 32, 33, 36, 37, 84
Public Services	10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 43, 50, 61, 62
Rural	66
Recreation	43, 44, 50, 58, 64, 65, 73, 74, 75, 85
Community Design	43, 60, 63, 75
Preferred development areas	69, 71
Renewal and/or redevelopment	20, 21, 70, 71
Financing	Appendix 2, 49, 56, 83-86
Historic preservation	56, 61, 62, 70, 73, 85

Public Engagement

The purpose of a comprehensive plan is to establish a vision for the future of Elkins and recommend specific projects that the city should invest in. Because the Elkins Planning Commission wants this plan to be guided and shaped by the priorities of residents, business owners, and other stakeholders, public input was vital to the process.

The West Virginia legislature has recognized the need for public involvement during the planning process and thus has established certain requirements in Chapter 8A. Accordingly, the planning commission is required to adopt procedures for public participation. The procedures adopted by the Elkins Planning Commission can be found in Appendix 1.

The West Virginia Code requires that the Planning Commission give notice and hold a public hearing before recommending a comprehensive plan to the governing body. After the public hearing and approval, the planning commission must submit the recommended plan to City Council. City Council is then required to hold a public hearing prior to adoption of the plan.

As part of the comprehensive plan update process, the Planning Commission identified and contacted stakeholders to discuss their specific issues and concerns regarding the town's future. Thirty organizations in total completed the stakeholder survey.

Other opportunities for public input included surveys that were posted online. Copies of the survey were also available at City Hall. The survey received 166 responses. Full results of the survey are maintained in the Office of the City Clerk.

In coordination with Elkin's Comprehensive Plan Update, the city recently completed a Strategic Plan. Elkins' 2024–2029 Strategic Plan outlines City Council's vision, mission, and values, which will guide the organization's efforts toward achieving these goals. The results of the strategic planning process, along with associated public engagement, were reviewed and incorporated into the comprehensive plan update.

Critical Issues

The City of Elkins Comprehensive Plan revolves around the critical issues that were identified during the planning process. Each chapter of the plan details a critical issue. This will help the city with implementation as many comprehensive plans contain numerous recommendations that never get implemented. The following issues were identified:

Critical Issue #1-Public Safety

Critical Issue #2- Housing

Critical Issue #3- Infrastructure

Critical Issue #4- Economic Development

Critical Issue #5- Land Use

Critical Issue #6- Technology

At the heart of a comprehensive plan is a vision statement that is instrumental in future planning for communities. The vision statement reflects how the community would like to develop in the next 10 years. The vision statement for the City of Elkins was developed using input from the Planning Commission, as well as the public.

To support the city in achieving its long-term vision, goals were developed based on the critical issues identified during the planning process. These issues served as the foundation for goal development. The goals are broad statements that express the community's long-term aspirations. Objectives provide more specific, measurable steps that help achieve each goal. Corresponding goals and objectives are outlined under each critical issue.

Vision Statement

Quality of life is cultivated for all individuals with opportunities in technology, recreation, and economic development and supported by community investment in arts, education, and healthcare.

Critical Issue #1
Public Safety

Background

Public safety refers to the protection of the public. Government is usually charged with the responsibility of keeping its residents safe. Public safety usually consists of police protection, fire protection, emergency medical services, and emergency management. This chapter also examines the medical needs of residents within and near the city. This chapter will explore the public safety departments and their needs and concerns, as well as the general public's.

Police Department

The City of Elkins Police Department consists of the police chief, 14 police officers and 2 support staff with a yearly budget of 1.2 million dollars. The department also has one K-9 unit. The police department patrols approximately 25 square miles. There is a mandatory training requirement for police officers. All applicants to the police department undergo background investigations and drug, psychological, medical, polygraph, and physical fitness tests.

Fire Department

The City of Elkins Fire Department was established in 1898. The department consists of a paid fire chief, 10 civil service firefighters, and 15 active volunteers that respond to an average 650 calls a year. The department not only provides fire services but EMS and rescue services to its 150 square miles first due area. Funding sources include the City Fire and Rescue Service Fee, Randolph County Commission, State Insurance Excise Tax, fundraisers, and donations. The department is also certified in swift-water rescue, HAZMAT containment, and has ten certified divers.

Emergency Medical Services

Emergency medical services in the City of Elkins are provided by the Randolph County Emergency Medical Organization (RCEMS). RCEMS has 10 ambulances distributed between three stations in Elkins (headquarters), Mill Creek, and Harman (Source: https://randolphctywv.gov/ambulance-authority/). The city has contributed money to RCEMS to help ease staffing pressures (Source- City of Elkins, 2025).

Emergency Management

The Office of Emergency Management is responsible for the planning, coordination, and implementation of all emergency management and Homeland Security related activities for Randolph County. The mission of the Randolph County Office of Emergency Management is to develop and maintain emergency plans and coordinate the use of County, State and Federal resources to prepare, respond, recover and mitigate the effects of natural and man-made disasters on the citizens of Randolph County. (Source: Randolph County Office of Emergency Management, 2025).

Since the adoption of the last comprehensive plan, the city has developed a shelter to be used in emergencies at the Phil Gainer Center. Both the center and city hall have generators. The city has also developed its own mass notification system.

Medical Facilities

Vandalia Health Davis Medical Center

The Davis Medical Center provides medical care to the City of Elkins and surrounding areas. A 75,000 sq. ft. addition to the center was recently completed that houses physicians' offices and an outpatient services center. The center offers the following services:
- Outpatient center
- Full-service emergency department
- Inpatient services
- Full-service diagnostic center
- Cancer care services
- Home health
- Pharmacy

The center also offers several community outreach programs throughout the year.

[WVU Elkins Corridor Medical Center](#)

The Elkins Corridor Medical Center offers family and preventative care services, same-day treatment for non-emergency illnesses and injuries, testing options, and advanced imaging. The center also offers rotating specialty clinics (oncology, orthopedics, ENT, heart and vascular, etc.).

[Valley Health Care](#)

Valley Health Care operates clinics in Elkins and Mill Creek that offers a variety of medical, preventative, and therapeutic services. Valley Health Care also provides school-based healthcare programs at Elkins High School, Elkins Middle School, Jennings Randolph Elementary School, Third Ward Elementary School, and North Elementary School. The program offers primary care inside of each school.

[UPMC Urgent Care](#)

The UPMC Urgent Care in Elkins offers treatment for non-emergency illnesses and injuries. Walk-in appointments are available, as well as scheduling online.

[Regional Task Force on Addiction, Homelessness, and Mental Health](#)

In 2021, the City of Elkins established a task force on addiction, homelessness, and mental health to explore solutions and partnerships to address gaps in services.   The task force's key achievements to date include (Source: City of Elkins, 2025):
- Partnership with Randolph County Board of Education to launch a substance abuse prevention program
- Established a referral system between Elkins Police, peer recover specialist, and treatment facilities
- Worked to certify sober living homes
- Hosted a public stigma reduction training with local businesses to address barriers to employment for people in recovery
- Secured allocation of opioid settlement funds to partner with Davis Health System to streamline transportation services to recovery services

Needs Assessment

Police Department

A top concern of residents identified during the planning process was neighborhood safety throughout Elkins. Residents expressed concern about drug activity and individuals experiencing homelessness. These issues are further exacerbated by the city's limited access to mental health and addiction services.

Fire Department

There is a need for repairs to the fire station and new equipment. Members of the department expressed concern with the lack of numbering and spacing on fire hydrants outside of the city on PSD systems.

The fire department is challenged by a small pool of volunteers. The lack of volunteers will eventually require additional paid positions to be funded. The fire service fee alone will not fund these positions. As volunteerism continues to decline, the department runs more mutual aid so call volume is likely to increase.

Emergency Management

The Randoph County Office of Emergency Management is concerned with the increased homelessness population within Elkins, which has resulted in emergency service incidents. Providing shelter for individuals that are homeless in the winter months is also a concern as there is only one homeless shelter in city limits.

Goal: Further strengthen public safety services to meet the needs of existing and future residents and businesses

The 2015 plan identified 5 action steps to address public safety concerns, of which 3 have been implemented.

Action Step 1 (partially implemented)- Budget for new equipment and staffing for the police departments
Police department has never been fully staffed due to decline in popularity of law enforcement as a career.

Action Step 2 (implemented)- Develop community-oriented policing to address the concerns of Elkins pertaining to crime
The city has a Facebook page and will soon be launching a police department Facebook page. There is an email tip line. Neighborhood watch was attempted but not much interest by residents to participate. The city recently implemented a mass notification system and will be offering a citizen's academy in the future. Two Randolph County Sherrif's are assigned as Prevention Resource Officers at Elkins Middle School and Tygarts Valley High School. The officers also cover Elkins High School and visit all the elementary schools as needed.

Action Step 3 (implemented)- Partner with the county to implement the countywide operations plan and determine a location for a shelter in Elkins
The Phil Gainer Center and Fire Department are used as shelters.

Action Step 4 (implemented)- Seek evidence based education for young children on drug abuse prevention
A partnership is planned between GameChanger, Randolph County Schools, the City of Elkins, the Randolph County Commission and MegaCorp is responsible to bring the GameChanger Opioid and Substance Misuse Prevention Education Initiative to Tygarts Valley Middle High, Elkins Middle and Elkins High Schools. GameChanger is a student-powered substance misuse prevention movement focusing on building school environments that curb drug use by implementing monitoring and sustaining GameChanger Student Peer Leadership Programs (Source: https://therealwv.com/2024/11/20/public-private-partnership-brings-gamechanger-to-randolph-county-schools/)

Action Step 5 (in progress)- Explore the possibility of a drug abuse treatment center in Elkins
The mayor's task force on drug addiction and homelessness is making progress towards a sober living facility.

Action Plan

Objective 1: Improve and expand public safety infrastructure and resources

Action Step- Coordinate with Randolph County to expand public safety services upon completion of Corridor H

The completion of Corridor H is expected to bring increased traffic into the county and the Elkins area, which may place additional demands on public safety services. To proactively address these potential impacts, the Elkins Police Department and Fire Department should collaborate with the Randolph County Sheriff's Office, Randolph County EMS, and local volunteer fire departments to align resources and develop coordinated response strategies.

Action Step- Establish a detective division within the police department

The police department has identified the need to establish a dedicated detective division, which would require hiring additional personnel.

Action Step - Ensure the fire department is fully equipped and supported

Repairs are needed to the fire station, such as masonry work to the exterior wall, installation of air conditioning, new wiring, and new windows.

The City of Elkins should continue to replace and repair fire equipment as needed. Outdated tools are an issue as they cannot be repaired if they break. Rescue tools and additional hardware and software for rope rescue is needed. The fire department is also planning to upgrade to Phase 2 communications and is currently working to ensure system compatibility. The fire department is currently fully staffed with three personnel assigned to each shift. However, due to a decline in volunteer participation, additional staffing may be required in the future.

Action Step- Consider the feasibility of a strategically located public safety substation

The fire department has determined a substation on Beverly Pike would improve emergency response times and expand service coverage in the first due area. A project plan and budget should be developed to determine estimated costs and design requirements.

Action Step- Explore partnerships with Randolph County regarding fire services

There are ten volunteer fire departments in the county; however, the City of Elkins Fire Department is the only one with paid staff. As a result, it is typically the primary agency able to respond to calls, especially during daytime hours. Additionally, the City Fire Department possesses specialized equipment not available to the volunteer departments—for example, the county's only hook and ladder truck is owned by the city.

A key concern in providing fire services beyond the city's primary response area is funding. The city's fire fee only covers its designated first-due area, while the county has a separate fire fee that supports the volunteer departments. Given these challenges, it may be beneficial to explore a partnership aimed at establishing a unified, county-wide fire department.

Objective 2: Expand public health and wellness services

Action Step- Continue the Regional Task Force on Addiction, Homelessness, and Mental Health

The task force should continue meeting to identify funding opportunities and establish programs focused on prevention. The WV First Foundation is a possible tool to address addiction, homelessness, and mental health issues.

Critical Issue #2
Housing

Background

Housing Characteristics

Demographics

Approximately 65 percent of homes in Elkins are classified as single-family homes. Of the occupied housing units in Elkins, approximately 63 percent are owner-occupied, and 37 percent are rentals. Homeowners tend to take better care of their home whereas renters may not stay in the community as long or may have limited control over the quality and appearance.

The city requires that vacant buildings be registered by the owner. Of the total housing units in Elkins, approximately 60 units are classified as vacant. Most vacant homes are homeowner housing and scattered throughout the city.

> The vacant property registry ordinance assesses a fee each year the building stands vacant. The ordinance seeks to encourage landowners to either rent their building or sell it instead of letting it sit vacant and possibly become dilapidated.

Elkins' housing stock is also considerably older, with over 38 percent built in 1939 or earlier. According to building permit data, in the last ten years, 38 new homes have been built. Older homes tend to require improvements and need to be continuously maintained.

The age of the homes in Elkins could contribute to the lower housing value. According to the 2023 American Community Survey, the median housing value in Elkins is $130,500. This value is slightly lower than the $170,800 value for West Virginia and the $137,800 value for Randolph County.

In 2013, the city enacted a rental registration program. The purpose of the program is to promote health and safety standards for rental housing. Rentals are inspected by the City in regard to condition and maintenance. Inspections include the following:

• Exterior Structure
• Interior Structure
• Light, ventilation, and occupancy limitations
• Plumbing facilities
• Mechanical requirements
• Electrical requirements
• Alarm requirements
• Fire safety requirements

Housing Agencies

Randolph County Housing Authority

The Randolph County Housing Authority (RCHA) seeks to make quality housing more affordable and accessible and promote strong communities and healthy quality of life in Randolph, Tucker, Upshur, Lewis, Barbour, and Pendleton counties.

The RCHA focuses on affordable housing, workforce development, emergency assistance, and community development initiatives.

The mission of Highland Community Builders (HCB) is to build opportunities for housing, workforce development, and supportive services that will allow individuals and families to work, live, and prosper.

HCB owns Highland Meadows, a planned moderately priced neighborhood, and plans to add additional housing units within the Highland Community Development.

HCB also plans to continue to partner with other community entities to support job training and educational opportunities in the community.

The HomeOwnership Center's (HOC) mission is to strengthen the communities of north central West Virginia by creating and supporting successful homeowners through responsible lending, credit counseling, financial advising, and home buyer education.

HOC works primarily as an educator in the broader Elkins community, providing financial education in the local high schools and at YouthBuild North Central, as well as providing financial and credit workshops on demand for various local organizations. HOC also offers home repair loans and down payment assistance loans to local homeowners and home buyers.

Woodlands Development Group, a Community Housing Development Organization, is involved in housing development, downtown redevelopment, community facilities, and community planning and advocacy. Woodlands Community Lenders, a Community Development Financial Institution, provides lending and technical assistance for small businesses and commercial real estate. Woodlands Development and Lending have worked on several projects in the City of Elkins, such as affordable family and senior housing development, rehabilitation of commercial properties, development of multi-family housing, and have provided loan capital and technical assistance to many small businesses and property owners.

Needs Assessment

One of the biggest concerns of residents that completed the online survey is the lack of quality affordable housing. The current housing stock is limited and aging. A lack of quality housing and choices, coupled with the cost of housing, may influence people's choice to live in Elkins. Other housing issues that were revealed during the planning process include abandoned and dilapidated housing and a lack of housing downtown. The development of residential housing above businesses downtown has increased since the last comprehensive plan. However, challenges to this type of housing include lack of parking and fire safety issues. Lastly, the number of short-term rentals in Elkins has increased. The influx of short-term rentals raises concerns about neighborhood character, rising rents, inflated property values, and a reduced supply of long-term housing for full-time residents.

Online Survey Results		
	Extremely important	**Very important**
Affordable housing options	51.8%	27.1%
	Extremely concerned	**Very concerned**
Abandoned and dilapidated buildings	42.2%	29.5%
	Highly appropriate	**Somewhat appropriate**
Single family housing	53.3%	26.67%
Multi-family housing	31.3%	36.1%

Predicting future housing needs in Elkins is challenging, particularly because much of the city is already built out. To accommodate additional demand, the city would need to either annex new land or focus on infill development within existing areas as identified on the **Development and Renewal/Redevelopment Map**.

The main concern regarding housing during the 2015 Comprehensive Plan process was abandoned and dilapidated housing. To address these concerns the city enacted a vacant property registry and a rental registration program and developed a dilapidated properties program. The city received a $300,000 grant from the WVDEP to aid in demolition of eleven (11) blighted properties. Thirteen (13) additional structures have been identified for demolition when additional funding becomes available. Woodlands Development Group has purchased four of the properties that have been demolished, the remaining are now vacant properties.

In 2022 the Randolph County Housing Authority completed a housing study. The study revealed the need for more low-income and market rate rentals and homes. Focus group attendees suggested a demand for moderate- and upper-income housing, especially in the $200,000 to $250,000 price range.

The lack of senior housing was identified as a concern in the prior comprehensive plan. The Woodlands Development Group built the Firefly Commons community to address the lack of senior housing in the region. The community consists of six duplexes and one four-unit townhouse. The units are 1 and 2 bedrooms designed for seniors and families. Firefly Commons are fully rented, as well as the senior housing at the First Ward School. The demand for senior housing still exists, especially senior housing that allow seniors to age in place.

There are a few opportunities for converting old businesses into housing as Elkins does not have many large industrial or commercial buildings that would be appropriate. Local schools may close in the future as part of the Randolph County Schools Reorganization Plan. The closure of these schools could create additional redevelopment opportunities.

Goal: Meet the housing needs of current residents of all economic levels, while exploring options for future expansion.

The 2015 plan identified 4 action steps to address housing concerns, of which 2 have been implemented.

Action Step 1 (implemented)- Increase enforcement of building codes and property maintenance ordinances to improve the appearance of the City.

Action Step 2 (implemented)- Hire an additional code enforcement officer to improve the appearance of the City

Action Step 3 (not implemented)- Require an inspection fee for building permit inspections.
The city does not feel that this fee is needed at this time.

Action Step 4 (not implemented)- Investigate the feasibility of developing a land bank
Establishing a land bank is not an appropriate solution for addressing the current patterns of abandoned and dilapidated buildings.

Action Plan

Objective 1: Evaluate options for encouraging housing infill and higher population density

Action Step: Prioritize funding for demolition of dilapidated buildings

The city is currently utilizing grant funding to demolish abandoned and dilapidated buildings. This effort is particularly important in preferred development areas, where demolition can support revitalization initiatives. To sustain this progress, the city should consider including demolition funding as a regular step in the annual budget.

Action Step: Embrace creative partnerships to address unsafe structures and enable the development of high-quality, affordable housing

The city will pursue partnerships to reduce the cost of removing unsafe structures and enable properties to return to productive use at attainable price points.

Action Step: Ensure code requirements for landlords are readily accessible

The city should consider creating a comprehensive guide for new landlords outlining all applicable codes. Additionally, ongoing educational opportunities for landlords should be explored.

Objective 2: Increase available housing and reduce obstacles to home ownership

Action Step: Explore opportunities to support homeownership

The city should explore partnerships with local nonprofits, lenders, and community organizations to expand investment and homeownership within the city limits. Through collaboration, the city can identify practical ways to reduce barriers to homeownership, encourage reinvestment in housing, and support long-term neighborhood stability. Any specific programs or tools would be evaluated based on feasibility, community need, and available resources.

Action Step: Explore loan programs that support property owners in making property maintenance and repair improvements

The city should consider establishing a program to assist residents in funding property improvements, such as removing dead or dying trees along sidewalks and addressing minor code violations. The program could offer low-interest loans or matching funds to encourage participation. Additionally, incorporating volunteer support to help complete the work should be explored.

Critical Issue #3
Infrastructure

Background

The city is well served with essential infrastructure and services, including public water and sewer systems, electricity, natural gas, high-speed internet, traffic signals, and hydrants, along with multiple transportation options.

Water and Sewer

Elkins operates its own sewer and water utilities. Infrastructure assets that the city is responsible for include a water-treatment plant and its associated tanks and distribution lines, and a wastewater-treatment plant and its associated collection lines.

The Elkins Water System covers approximately 13.13 square miles and serves the Crystal Springs, Highland Park, Cravensdale, Harpertown, Mountain Aire Estates, and Georgetown Road areas. The city also provides wholesale water to the Leadsville and Midland Public Service Districts (PSDs). The only source of water for the system is supplied by the Tygart River, which is pumped to the treatment plant and then gravity fed to the distribution system.

Updates have been made to the system to accommodate the community water needs. 2018 marked the beginning of the *Water System Improvements Project* which included:
- New water plant
- New precast post-tensioned concrete Clearwell (enclosed tank)
- Line upgrades in 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th Wards and Crystal Springs
- Construction of three booster stations
- Replacement of all water meters
- New Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition System (SCADA) at the treatment plant, which allows for the monitoring and control of various processes within the plant

The City of Elkins Sanitary System covers approximately 4.7 square miles and services Elkins, Leadsville PSD, which includes Crystal Springs and Highland Park, and Midland PSD, which includes Glenmore, Chenoweth Creek, Teaberry Hills, US 219, and Pineview.

The Elkins Wastewater Treatment Plant ("WWTP") was rehabilitated and expanded in 2008. The capacity of the facility was taken from an average daily design flow of 2.5 million gallons per day ("mgd") to an average daily design flow capacity of 4.99 mgd. The peak hourly design flow capacity was also increased to 10.0 mgd. The WWTP is currently 35% hydraulically loaded.
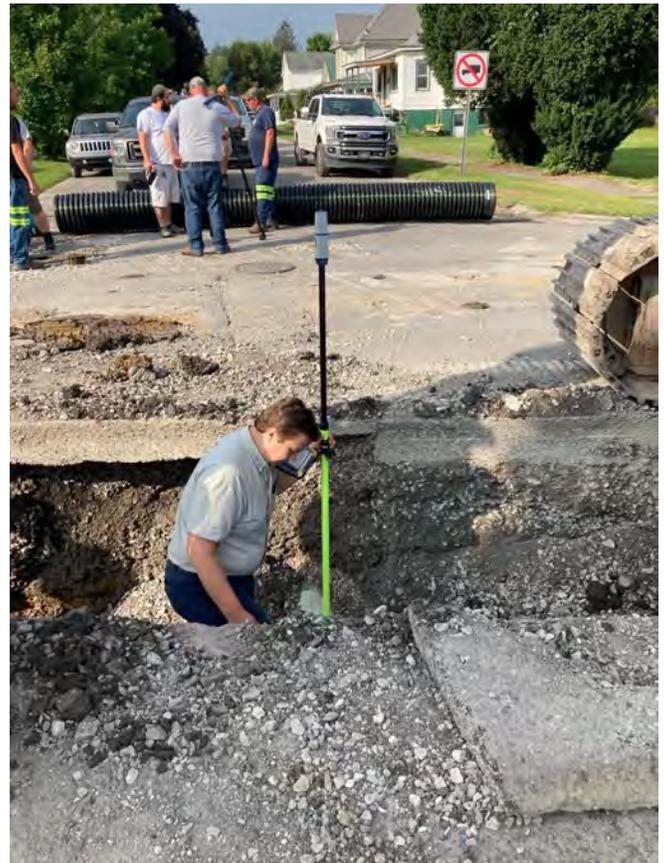
While the city's wastewater plant is newer and will not need replacing for some time, a major issue remains related to wastewater; The city's original system of wastewater-collection pipes was built to receive both wastewater (i.e., both sewage and household gray water) and rain (i.e., collected both through catch basins and drains in streets and from some buildings whose rain-gutter downspouts are still connected to the wastewater-collection system). During heavy rainfall events, the resulting volume of combined rainwater and wastewater can overwhelm system capacity, causing discharges into the Tygart Valley River through various overflow or "outfall" openings.

Transportation

Roadways

The City of Elkins is the county seat of Randolph County and as such receives a large amount of traffic. Three major routes travel directly through the heart of Elkins: US Route 219, US Route 33 and State Route 92.

US Route 33 connects the City of Elkins with the City of Buckhannon to the west and the Monongahela National Forest to the east. US Route 33 is part of Corridor H. Corridor H is part of the Appalachian Development Highway System, that once finished, will run from I-79 in Weston to I-81 in Strasburg, Virginia. Corridor H travels through two national forests and mountainous terrain in West Virginia, which has led to many environmental concerns about the construction of the roadway. Currently, approximately 157 miles of Corridor H is completed (Source: Bridgestunnels, 2024).

US 219 connects Elkins to the Town of Parsons in the North and the Town of Beverly and Snowshoe Mountain Resort in the South. State Route 92 connects Elkins to the City of Belington in the North and then intersects with US 219 south of the city.

In 2024, West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT) conducted traffic counts to better determine the level of traffic in Elkins. The traffic counts were then used to calculate average daily traffic (ADT) of roadways in Elkins. Average daily traffic refers to the number of vehicles traveling through a point on streets in a 24-hour period.

The following are the results from the counts:
- US 33 entering the city from the North–9,859 ADT
- Harrison Avenue before the intersection with US 33– 11, 359 ADT
- US 33 (Randolph Avenue) between the before Graham Street– 16, 148 ADT
- US 33 leaving the City of Elkins in the East– 4,594 ADT
- US 219 leaving the city from the South– 20,175 ADT
- South Davis Avenue at the Tygart River– 5,608 ADT

Parking

Parking in the downtown Central Business District is limited on most streets to three hours, Monday through Friday, 8 AM to 5 PM, which is enforced by the police.

There are various parking lots and spaces for the public to park located throughout the City of Elkins. Most are in the downtown business district. Parking lots are located at:
- City Hall Parking lot- 104 free spaces in a paved lot
- Depot Parking lot- 33 free spaces
- Sweco Parking lot- 8 permit spaces, 24 free spaces
- Seneca Mall Parking lot- 32 permit spaces, 47 free parking spaces
- City Park Parking Lot- 60 free spaces

Pedestrian Network

The City of Elkins has a network of sidewalks throughout its municipal limits to aid those wishing to walk. It is the property owner's responsibility to maintain the sidewalks. Property owners are also responsible for cleaning ice and snow off their sidewalks.

Allegheny Highlands Trail

The Allegheny Highlands Trail follows the former Western Maryland Railway for 26 miles from Elkins railyard depot to Hendricks. There is an additional 5-mile section located near Davis. The trail will eventually connect the City of Elkins with the Town of Davis. Allegheny Highlands Trail is currently closed at mile 16-17 due to corridor H construction. The Allegheny Highlands Trail also connects with the Blackwater Canyon Trail, which goes from Hendricks to Thomas.

Elkins Area Shared Trails ("EAST")

In addition to advancing the Allegheny Highlands Trail, EAST completed a Trail Master Plan in 2023. As of 2025, the organization is actively engaged in the following initiatives:

• Davis & Elkins College Trails – Phase 1 completed; construction is expected to continue into 2026.
• Darby Farm – Property ownership is currently under investigation.
• Glendale Skills Park – Transportation Alternatives funding has been awarded; the project is awaiting a Notice to Proceed from the Division of Highways.
• Vandalia DMC Bike Park – Ongoing discussions are underway.
• U.S. Forest Service – Monongahela National Forest – Phase 1 is in progress, including completion of the environmental assessment.

Country Roads Transit provides public transportation to residents in Randolph and Upshur Counties. Country Roads Transit provides services to the City of Elkins via a North and South loop. The Elkins North Loop provides service to the following areas:

- Senior Center
- Gateway Apartments
- Randoph Avenue/Kennedy Street
- Reed/Highland Streets
- DMV-DHHR
- Heavener Acres Trailer Park
- Heavener/Maryland Avenues
- Pine/Grant Streets
- Randolph Village Apartments
- Lough Street/Westview Drive
- Tygart Valley Apartments
- Elkins Manor
- Vernon Avenue/West Central Street
- Andrews Street/Southview Avenue
- Harrison Avenue/Crystal Springs

- Tygart Valley Mall
- Lough/Yokum Streets
- Robert E Lee Avene/Central Street
- Central Street/Worth Avenue
- Davis Memorial Hospital
- Cancer Center

The Elkins South Loop provides service to the following areas:

- Senior Center
- Davis & Elkins College
- 5th Street/Davis Avenue
- Davis Avenue/1st Street
- 3rd Street/Railroad Avenue
- 2nd Street/Henry Avenue
- 11th Street/Cole Avenue
- 13th Street/Lavalette Avenue
- 16th Street/Robin Hood
- Scotts Ford
- South Davis to 13 Street
- Cole Ave/11th Street
- Kroger
- Elkins Plaza– Big Lots
- Valley Village Apartments
- Valley Point Mall
- Wal-Mart
- Plantation Shopping Center
- US 219 North/Kroger
- 11th Street/Delaware Avenue
- Davis Street/Henry Avenue
- 3rd Street/Davis Avenue

The cost to ride the bus is $1.25 for adults, $30 for a monthly pass, and children under the age of 6 are free.

Railroad

The City of Elkins is known throughout the state for its railroad history.   The WV Central and Pittsburgh Railway was developed in the late 1890s in Elkins, which led to the city experiencing new levels of growth. The railroad left Elkins in four different directions; north to Cumberland, MD; west to Belington, WV; south to Huttonsville, WV; and east to Durbin, WV. The railroad continued to expand and in the 1930s began to offer passenger service. At one point, 18 passenger trains were leaving Elkins a day. By the 1980s all railroad service had ended, and the railyard sat vacant for many years. CSX now uses portions of the lines for freight operations. The West Virginia State Rail Authority purchased other portions of the original railroad and

contracts to the Durbin and Greenbrier Valley Railroad for a tourist railroad train.

Durbin and Greenbrier Valley Railroad

The Durbin and Greenbrier Valley Railroad ("DGVRR") operates out of the train station in Elkins. The DGVR offers five different tourist trains for visitors to experience.

- Cass Bald Knob Trip– 4.5 hours, round-trip train ride, climbing 2,390 feet from Cass to Bald Knob with remarkable views of West Virginia forests and wildlife and Greenbank Observatory
- Cass Whittaker Station– 2 hour trip that Climbs the lower slopes of Cheat Mountain along Leatherbark Creek to visit the authentic logging camp at Whittaker Station
- Greenbrier Express–5.5 hour ride from the restored, historically important town of Cass and closely follows the clear, free-flowing Greenbrier River to the small mountain village of Durbin, passing through a secluded wilderness portion of the 950,000-acre Monongahela National Forest
- New Tygart Flyer– 4 hour trip featuring mountain grades, an "S" curve tunnel, a high bridge, and miles of unspoiled mountain views. Vintage diesel-powered locomotives climb along the cascading Shavers Fork of the Cheat River to the High Falls of Cheat
- Castaway Caboose– overnight package that includes a train ride on the Durbin Rocket with an overnight stay in a refurbished caboose car

The DGVR also offers many special excursions throughout the year, such as the Elkins Murder Mystery Wine Train, Greenbrier Express Wild West Special, Cass to Spruce Trip, Cass Parade of Steam, Christmas at Cass, and Ramps and Rails.

The Elkins Depot Welcome Center

The Elkins Depot Welcome Center is in the railyard and serves as not only a welcome center but the home of the Durbin and Greenbrier Valley Railroad and trailhead of the Allegheny Highlands Trail. The center was built by the Western Maryland Railroad Company in 1908. Located in the heart of downtown Elkins, the Elkins Depot Welcome Center carries informational brochures on music and arts, food and lodging options, train excursions, outdoor recreational opportunities and regional attractions. In 2024, approximately 23,571 people stopped at the Elkin Depot Welcome Center.

Elkins-Randolph County Regional Airport

The Elkins-Randolph County Regional Airport is located two miles south of Elkins on Airport Road. The airport provides services for private flights as well as hangar space, fuel, vehicle rentals, and dining. On average, the airport has approximately 10 operations a day, including both individual and business flights.

River Transportation

Even though the Tygart River is in Elkins, it is not navigable for commercial traffic. There are no ports near Elkins.

Intermodal Transportation

No intermodal transportation options exist in the city.

Needs Assessment

The needs assessment considers the public participation received during the planning process. This information includes Planning Commission input, public survey responses, and stakeholder interviews.

Water and Sewer

Many issues relating to water and sewer still exist in the Elkins area. One significant issue is that the city's original system of wastewater-collection pipes was built to receive both wastewater (i.e., both sewage and household gray water) and rain (i.e., collected both through catch basins and drains in streets and from some buildings whose rain-gutter downspouts are still connected to the wastewater-collection system). During heavy rainfall events, the resulting volume of combined rainwater and wastewater can overwhelm system capacity, causing discharges into the Tygart Valley River through various overflow or "outfall" openings. In 2011, the city entered into a consent decree with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection that requires the city to take certain steps to reduce these overflow events and other related problems. Generally, the city's sanitary sewer system needs improvement measures and expansion of service to underserved areas.

While no environmental concerns related to the water system currently exist, there is a future concern

regarding the loss of raw water storage due to silt filling the Tygart river bed. The lack of certified operators throughout the State also creates a major concern, forcing water systems to compete against one another to maintain adequate operator coverage.

The high fail rate for water certification exams is the leading factor in this shortage that is already adversely affecting systems throughout the state. The City recommends that WVBPH explore expanded outreach and preparation for promising candidates and also consider further refining its testing process to maintain a skilled and knowledgeable workforce for West Virginia communities.

Road Network

The city experiences a high level of traffic due to its location at the intersection of major routes, and its position as the county seat, and the largest incorporated area in Randolph County. Most residents are concerned with the amount of traffic generally, and more specifically with traffic on Randolph Avenue. Randolph Avenue experiences an average daily traffic volume of approximately 17,000 vehicles. Many would like to see more bicycle-safe road networks, crosswalk lights, and left-turn lights, and re-routing traffic through different routes in the city, especially truck traffic. Truck traffic on Davis Avenue is an ongoing issue and should be restricted to local deliveries. Another safety concern is the intersection of US 219 and Glenmore Loop Road. This area has been the site of multiple accidents, as reported by both the police and fire departments.

Additionally, residents are concerned by unsafe intersections, noting specifically poor visibility in many locations. The physical condition of numerous streets and sidewalks is also of concern. Lack of appropriate traffic control signs and systems, poor street lighting, unsafe access to outside roads, and inadequate wayfinding and traffic calming measures are all still concerns held by the community. Many of these concerns are being addressed by the Elkins Streetscape Master Plan. The plan was created to revitalize downtown and assist in city beautification efforts and includes analysis, concepts, materials palette, and recommendations for streetscape improvements in the City of Elkins. The recommended infrastructure updates in the plan align with the current concerns of the city and create phased implementation measures to address the identified issues.

Parking

The availability of parking is very important to the health and vitality of the City of Elkins' Central Business District and has become a more pressing issue with the increase in downtown residents. The City's 2023 Streetscape Master Plan determined the amount parking available within Elkins is adequate for the city's needs but identified a need to educate the public on where available parking is located. Some residents have maintained that more parking is necessary in the community, especially visitor parking. In 2024, city council approved a parking study that will gather information regarding parking location, amount of available parking, and develop a parking demand analysis (Source: Inter Mountain, 2024).

Pedestrian Network

Pedestrian safety is one of the main concerns of residents in Elkins. Issues with pedestrian safety include poor sidewalk conditions, lack of sidewalks and crosswalks, and no bicycle network. There are also many obstacles for people with limited mobility. In 2023 the Elkins Streetscape Master Plan was created to promote future development in downtown Elkins, with one of its main goals being to "enhance the pedestrian experience within the public realm and promote active and safe streets." (Source: Elkins Streetscape Master Plan, 2023)

Pedestrian safety is a concern by many on Randolph Avenue, Railroad Avenue, Kerens Avenue, College Street, Wilson Street, Glendale Avenue, Middle School Area and the Central Business District. Some residents would like a sidewalk and/or bike lane constructed on the 5-lane (US 219) for those who need to walk and/or bike to the shopping plazas from downtown. Solutions to pedestrian safety concerns include more crosswalks with lights and buttons, especially downtown, the addition of better footpaths, and sidewalk restoration. The Streetscape Plan also addresses these concerns, as discussed above.

Public Transit

Many residents would like to see improvements made to the public transit system in Elkins. Country Roads Transit ("CRT") provides fixed routes in the City of Elkins; however, many residents are under the assumption that the bus is only for senior citizens. Residents feel that CRT should market its service better, as well as advertise the routes available. Residents also stated that more bus shelters are needed along the designated routes. Services have been somewhat expanded since the 2015 comprehensive plan, with the addition of one shelter in First Ward.

Elkins-Randolph County Regional Airport

Although the Randolph County airport is small it is very important to Elkins and the regional area. Transportation for passengers/pilots once they land in Elkins has proved a major issue, with no taxi and very little uber availability. Car rental is available on Monday-Friday 8AM-5PM, but there are no weekend hours and after-hour service.

Goal: Upgrade infrastructure to meet current needs while preparing for future growth

The 2015 plan identified 4 action steps to address infrastructure concerns, of which 2 have been implemented.

Action Step 1 (not implemented)- Improve pedestrian safety on Railroad Avenue
This project is included in the Streetscape Master Plan. The city is currently waiting for funding to implement the plan.

Action Step 2 (not implemented)- Develop a sidewalk program to prioritize sidewalk improvements
Downtown sidewalk improvements are included in the Streetscape Master Plan. The city is currently waiting for funding to implement the plan.

Action Step 3 (partially implemented)- Install signage and bike amenities once the bike trail is completed
The trail is signed properly and bike amenities, such as bike racks, are installed at the Railroad Depot, City Hall, and along 3rd Street. A bicycle repair station has not been installed.

Action Step 4 (not implemented)- Install directional signage to all parking lots
The installation of directional signage is included in the Streetscape Master Plan. The city is currently waiting for funding to implement the plan.

Action Step 5 (implemented)- Improve and install lighting at the City Hall parking lot
The city paved and improved the parking lot in 2022.

Action Step 6 (not implemented): Collaborate with WVDOT to explore options to address traffic congestion on Randolph Avenue
WVDOT is unresponsive to requests for additional pedestrian crossings, etc.

Action Plan

Objective 1: Modernize water, wastewater, and stormwater management.

Action Step: Expand public water and sewer to underserved areas

Underdeveloped areas in need of better public water services include North Randolph Avenue and Corridor H from Barbour County line to Tucker County line.

Underdeveloped areas in need of better public sewer services include Georgetown Road and North Randolph Avenue. There is also a need for improved services to satellite communities (Midland PSD/Leadsville PSD).

Action Step: Continue to improve the city's water and sewer system

Generally, the city's sanitary sewer system needs improvement measures, including approval of a Long-Term Control Plan and Consent Decree, stormwater separation and maximization of collection system capacity and CSO Control/Elimination, and upgraded Land Application Methods.

Additionally, a secondary source of water will need to be identified to support the function of the system and further development of areas identified with less than adequate service.
While no environmental concerns related to the water system currently exist, there is a future concern regarding the loss of raw water storage. The Tygart River loop needs to be dredged to prevent loss of raw water storage.

Action Step: Consider a stormwater utility fee

Stormwater utility fees are necessary to maintain the public stormwater system and mandated and enforced by the EPA and the DEP through the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES). A storm water utility fee is used to finance annual compliance with the NPDES permitting standards. All residential properties would pay a flat rate fee and commercial property fees would be based on amount of impervious surface on the property. However, it's important to recognize that introducing an additional fee could pose a challenge for city residents, especially as water and sewer costs continue to increase.

Action Step: Consider a stormwater ordinance

As there are still challenges with stormwater drainage, there is a need for stormwater management regulations to reduce flooding and protect public health and safety. The Department of Environmental Protection requires construction sites of more than 1 acre to obtain a construction stormwater general permit. In order to have a stormwater ordinance the city would have to enact a Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO). Regulations could require additional permits based on square footage of residential and commercial construction. Provisions would include measures for retention, detention, and distribution of stormwater management.

Action Step: Update the GIS mapping system

In 2021, the City of Elkins established a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) department to support data collection and digital mapping of city infrastructure. Since its inception, the department has developed a GIS database that includes information on water meters, water lines, dilapidated buildings, zoning, ward boundaries, the TIF district, spring cleanup information, parking, parks and recreation, and election results.

At present, the city no longer has a dedicated GIS technician to maintain or expand the database. To ensure continued accuracy and usability of the GIS system, the city should continue partnering with Region VII Planning and Development Council to perform updates and manage the GIS data as needed.

Objective 2: Facilitate the safe, efficient movement of drivers

Action Step: Implement the Streetscape Master Plan

The City of Elkins continues to seek funding to implement the Streetscape Master Plan. Phase One includes improvements to Tablet Square and the Elkins Commercial Core at an estimated cost of $3.5-$4.6 million:
- Striping of lanes and parallel parking
- Sidewalk replacement
- Street tree replacement and custom Elkins tree grates
- Green infrastructure systems
- Brick paver banding along sidewalk edge
- Brick paver sidewalks at intersections
- Street furniture
- Improvements at the intersection of 3rd Street and Davis Avenue
- Catenary lighting along 3rd Street and Davis Avenue
- Parking reconfiguration at Tablet Square
- Landing plaza near bus parking at rail depot
- Landscape treatment at rail depot
- Rail depot clock
- Street lighting

Action Step: Install wayfinding signage

The Streetscape Plan recommends the city implement a robust wayfinding system utilizing the developed signage palette. The first step is an assessment of existing wayfinding network and signage to identify gaps in information and usability. The assessment should focus on identifying the key destinations, attractions and resources that visitors would need to navigate around the city.

Action Step: Collaborate with WV DOT to create safe and cohesive transportation network

Most major roads within the city limits are owned and maintained by the West Virginia Department of Transportation (WV DOT). To effectively address existing challenges within the transportation network,

stronger collaboration between the city and the DOT is essential. Additionally, the completion of Corridor H may impact local traffic circulation. It is important that potential solutions be discussed with the Division of Highways (DOH) prior to the project's completion.

Objective 3: Improve pedestrian and bicycle accessibility of the city

Action Step: Consider various approaches for developing and maintaining sidewalks throughout the city

Although the Streetscape Master Plan includes a sidewalk assessment for the downtown area, there is currently no plan addressing sidewalks beyond downtown. Priority should be given to assessing sidewalk needs around each school and park, and every neighborhood should have a designated sidewalk route connecting to downtown. To support this effort, the city may need to reallocate resources for paving and maintaining sidewalks. Additionally, a policy should be considered requiring sidewalk improvements to be made in conjunction with street paving projects.

Action Step: Continue to encourage bicycle friendly amenities

The Streetscape Master Plan outlines strategies for making the city more bicycle-friendly. To encourage and support cyclists, key amenities should include dedicated bicycle infrastructure, secure parking and storage, maintenance and repair facilities, and clear signage.
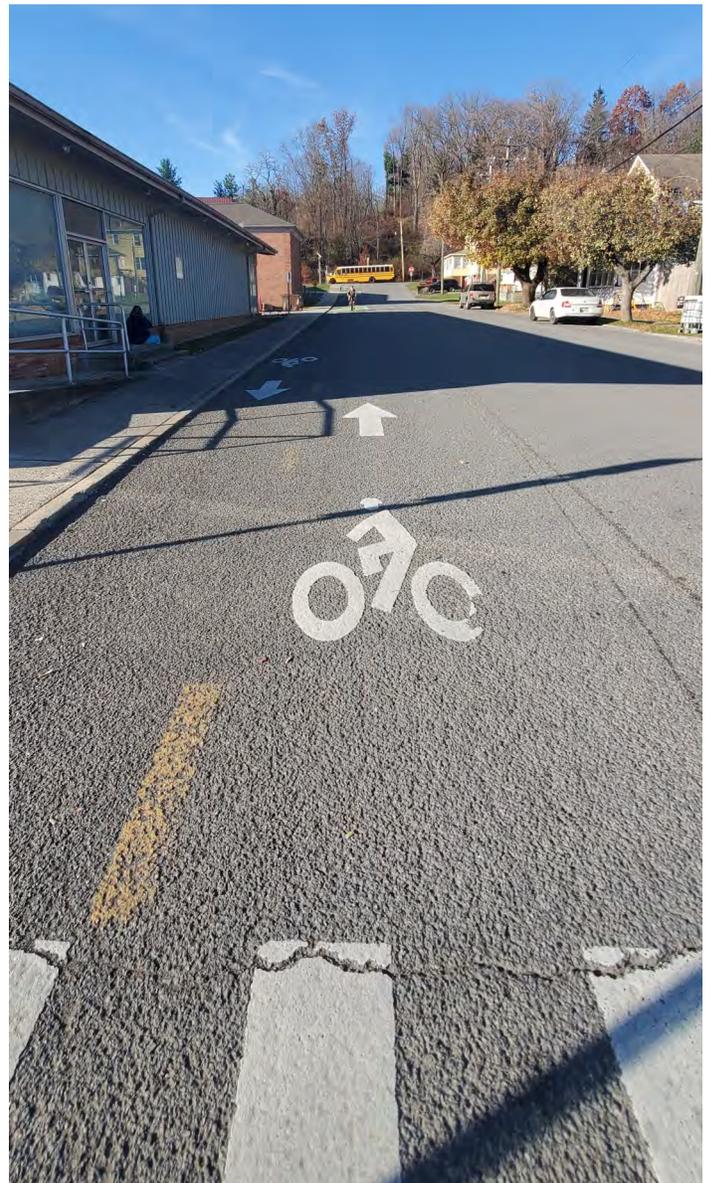
Critical Issue #4
Economic Development

Background

Economic development was determined to be a priority for the City of Elkins during the planning process. Economic development contributes to the quality of life of those that live and work in Elkins. Therefore, it is important to examine what factors hinder economic growth. This chapter will examine the economic structure of the city, as well as the revitalization of the downtown and the effect of tourism on the local economy in Elkins. The action plan then serves to address any issues that are discovered during the planning process.

Demographics

Population Characteristics

To better understand economic conditions in Elkins, population trends in the City were examined utilizing US Census data. As shown on **Chart 1: Population Trends**, the City of Elkins has experienced population decline since 1980. Population decline remains a major concern, with a loss of 160 people from 2010 to 2020—more than double the decrease in population from 2000 to 2010.

Determining actual population projections is difficult as there are many circumstances that are not considered when developing the models. Also, West Virginia has not developed projections for incorporated areas. In April of 2020 the WVU-College of Business and Economics completed population projections for all the counties. The projected population loss for Randolph County is 9.46 percent between 2020 and 2040. The county projections and past population counts were considered in developing Elkin's population projections.

- 1970-1980: 3% loss
- 1980-1990: 13% loss
- 1990-2000: 5% loss
- 2000-2010: 0.8% loss
- 2010-2020: 2.3%

The US Census is projecting a slight decrease in population from now to 2030. Over the last 20 years, the population has decreased at a rate of .178% each year. Therefore, a conservative estimate of population change would suggest that the population of Elkins will continue to slowly decrease.

The median age in the City of Elkins in 2023 was 36.1. This is younger than the median age of Randolph County of 44.2. Age cohorts are very important for communities to understand during the planning process. Different age groups affect the economic vitality of a community. Both the younger retired and older retired tend to spend less money in a community than the younger age cohorts. The younger age cohorts, especially those in the childbearing and childrearing age cohorts, usually comprise the work force of a community and tend to spend more money than other age cohorts.

Elkins has more residents in the Childrearing (35-54 years) age cohort than any other cohort, as shown on **Chart 2: Age Cohorts**. The city lost residents from this cohort between 2010 and 2020 and gained residents

in the pre-retirement and younger retired cohorts. Therefore, the city should be prepared to deal with an aging population in the future, which can affect the available workforce for the community. The number of younger cohorts decreased slightly between 2010 and 2020. The city gained residents under the age of 5 and ages 5-9 but lost residents in the childbearing cohort. This could be a concern as residents in this age cohort may be leaving the city due to lack of economic opportunities.

Economic Characteristics

Unemployment rates are important to review as they are an indicator of economic growth in a region. According to WorkForce WV, the unemployment rate in July 2025 in Randolph County was at 4.9 percent.

According to WorkForce WV the following businesses were major employers within the County in 2024:
1. Vandalia Health
2. Randolph County Board of Education
3. Armstrong Hardwood Flooring Company
4. Walmart Associates, Inc.
5. Davis and Elkins College
6. West Virginia Department of Highways
7. West Virginia's Choice, Inc.
8. WV DCR Dept of Corrections Rehabilitation
9. Elkins Regional Convalescent Center
10. EMS, Inc

The mean travel time for residents for work is approximately 11.6 minutes. While residents are not traveling very far for employment opportunities, they are most likely leaving the city for neighboring areas to work. Residents within Elkins work in many different industries, which are shown on Chart 3: Employment by Industry. Most residents are employed in educational services, health care, and social assistance sectors. Retail trade and arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services are the next highest industries for workers in the City. Since tourism plays such a huge role in the regional economy it is of no surprise that many people work in these industries.

According to the 2023 American Community Survey, the median household income for residents in the City of Elkins is $47,746, which is considerably lower than Randolph County's median household income of $55,057. A lower median household income is a concern as residents may not have the disposable income to spend money in the community, which in turn affects the economic growth of that community. In addition, there is less income to invest in and maintain personal property.

The lower median income could correlate to the educational attainment of the community. According to the 2023 American Community Survey only 22.3 percent of the population of Elkins ages 25-34 have a bachelor's degree. Approximately 9.4 percent of the population between ages 18-24 percent have a bachelor's degree. However, according to the age cohort data, many of the residents in this age cohort are leaving the city, likely due to limited employment opportunities.

Downtown Elkins

The center of the City of Elkins is the downtown business district with approximately 106 businesses. Downtown revitalization is currently being addressed through multiple initiatives. Main Street Elkins was previously a driving force behind downtown revitalization but is no longer active in the community. Envision Elkins is an informal group of downtown Elkins and greater Elkins business property owners with the mission of enhancing property and business investments in the Elkins area through existing organizations. The organization meets monthly to discuss projects and provide input, but do not have any direct projects in the community and currently do not sponsor any events.

The City of Elkins recently completed a streetscape plan to help with some aspects of revitalization. The streetscape plan was developed to encourage design consistency within the urban area of Elkins while promoting the cultural character of the city. Additionally, the improvements within the public realm will assist in the overall effort to revitalize the downtown core, improve the local economy, and help attract new businesses and visitors while increasing the quality of life for Elkins residents. (Streetscape Improvement Plan, 2024).

Medical Centers

Elkins serves as a hub for medical facilities with the presence of Davis Medical Center Valley Health, Elkins Corridor Medical Center, and UPMC Urgent Care.

Outdoor Recreation

Multiple organizations have combined efforts to attract and retain new residents through recreational improvements, including trail development, mapping, and coordination with similar communities situated at the gateway of the Monongahela National Forest. Two organizations working within the Elkins area to improve recreational activities include Elkins Area Shared Trails (EAST), and the Mon Forest Towns.

Elkins Area Shared Trails (EAST)

As outlined earlier, EAST continues to advance multiple trail planning and development initiatives across the region. In addition to trail projects, EAST sponsors several community events including youth bike events, trail education workshops, community wellness events focused on outdoor mindfulness, and stakeholder engagement functions.

Mon Forest Towns (MFT)

The mission of the Mon Forest Town (MFT) Organization is to collaboratively grow a strong, sustainable recreation economy that enhances the quality of life for residents and visitors by providing the best outdoor experience. In their 2022-2026 strategic plan, they included a list of 7 goals:
- Improve community health and wellness through promotion of outdoor recreation activities and infrastructure improvement;
- Develop an outdoor recreation entrepreneurial culture by supporting the creation and growth of local recreation and tourism-based businesses;
- Promote the uniqueness of the Mon Forest Towns and recreation opportunities in the region through collaborative regional marketing;

- Develop world-class trails and outdoor recreation opportunities in the Mon Forest Towns region;
- Increase employment opportunities in recreation related fields to build a year-round recreation economy;
- Create a downtown experience that recreationalists would enjoy;
- Develop a Sustainable Partnership Framework.

Mon Forest Towns have implemented many projects within Elkins. Using information gathered from assessments of outdoor related assets, MFT has created digital and physical maps. Additionally, the group has installed signage at major entry points to the city. Currently, MFT is working with the City of Elkins to develop branding assets that can be used for signage and wayfinding materials to improve connectivity within the city and from the city to the Forest. The development of a Bikepacking and Gravel Route project that will identify connections from Elkins to the National Forest and to the other Mon Forest Towns is also underway.

In 2024, MFT hosted an event in Elkins to engage all aspects of the outdoor recreation community. The same event will be held in 2025 in another MFT community.

Industrial Parks

There is one industrial park in Elkins-the Elkins Industrial Park-located on Industrial Park Road. In recent years, the Industrial Park has expanded in acreage but has not yet constructed buildings. The park was developed by the Randolph County Development Authority. Major businesses include Elkins Builders Supply, Wood Technology Center, Elkins Iron and Metal, Wilson Lumber, Hamer Lumber, Hamer Pellet and Fuels, Kelly Foundry, Elkins Truck Service, and Woodford Oil.

Elkins Railyard

The Elkins Railyard is owned by the Randolph County Development Authority. The railyard was developed for $1.5 million with federal and state funding. The railyard is composed of approximately 20 acres with 2 lots left to be developed (following the completion of the Event & Conference Center), including a 2.45-acre lot located directly behind the Mon Health Heart and Vascular facility, and 2.4 acres in the southern end of the railyard. Current businesses in the railyard include:

- Durbin & Greenbrier Valley Railroad
- Elkins Depot Welcome Center
- Holiday Inn Express and Suites
- Mon Health Heart & Vascular
- Go Mart
- Appalachian Animal Hospital
- Elkins Physical Therapy & Sports Injury Clinic
- Fresenius Kidney Care
- Wil-Ken, Inc.
- WV Railroad Museum
- Railyard Event & Conference Center (under construction)

The railyard is also home to the tourism train: the Durbin and Greenbrier Valley Railroad.

Funding sources for new event center:

- US Economic Development Administration
- USDA Rural Development
- WV Water Development Authority
- State of West Virginia
- City of Elkins

Randolph County Commission

Randolph County Development Authority

Ascend Greater Elkins Program

Ascend Greater Elkins is a program of the Brad and Alys Smith Outdoor Economic Development Collaborative (OEDC). The mission of the OEDC is to empower West Virginia's communities and partners to advance the state's economy and enhance quality of life through outdoor recreation. Ascend, WV is a remote work program that provides monetary and outdoor recreation incentives for the nation's remote workers to relocate to West Virginia. There are currently 74 Ascend members and their families (139 total people) who have moved to the greater Elkins area or are moving in the next six months. Sixteen members have completed the program in the last 4 months, and a vast majority (all but 3) remain in the region.

Ascend Greater Elkins sponsors over 50 events a year to help its program members settle into their new community, find a sense of purpose through volunteering, and explore the outdoors. Some of these events are open to the public or are hosted in partnership with other organizations (for example, Augusta Heritage Center, City of Elkins, Randolph County Humane Society, and the Nature Conservancy of West Virginia.) Additionally, Ascend WV is currently working on the Railyard Event Center project along with the Randolph County Development Authority, which will include a community coworking space. The expected completion of this space is Spring 2026.

Economic Development Organizations

[Randolph County Development Authority](#)

The main goal of the Randolph County Development Authority (RCDA) is to facilitate a strong economy in Randolph County. This is done through business, community, and workforce development efforts. The RCDA receives Local Economic Development funding through the State of West Virginia as well as annual allocations from the City of Elkins and the Randolph County Commission. The RCDA is dependent upon rental income, grant funding, and funds received from property sales to be able to execute larger development projects.

Currently, the RCDA is constructing a 28,000 square foot event and conference center in the Elkins Railyard. This space will include a 420-seat theater and 500+ seat conference center, a full catering kitchen, and a coworking space for participants of the Ascend Greater Elkins program. The project has been projected to create 87 jobs, retain 13 jobs, and generate $22.4 million in private investment. (Kirk 2022, *$5 Million Announced for New Event Center in Elkins*).

Additionally, they are in the process of developing a new 75-acre industrial park within the city limits.

The RCDA continues to operate the WV Wood Technology Center, which performs workforce development training for the region. The Authority also hosted a Job Fair in the spring of 2025.

One of the continuing goals of the RCDA is to recruit businesses that would diversify the economy of the greater Elkins area. Some areas they have identified specifically include agriculture and agritourism, as well as businesses in the technology, logistics, and hardwood sectors.

Randolph County Convention and Visitors Bureau

The Randolph County Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) is the official visitor center for Randolph County. The CVB provides information on attractions, lodging and dining in the county. The CVB 's main mission is to increase economic vitality for local retail establishments, restaurants, services, lodging and entities related to tourism and recreation while offering excellent service to visitors of Elkins. The CVB is funded by city and county lodging tax proceeds.

Currently, the CVB is working with area attractions and businesses to bring a greater presence in tourism opportunities. One effort includes the production of four tourism video campaigns regarding: (1) outdoor recreation, (2) arts and culture, (3) history, and (4) festivals.
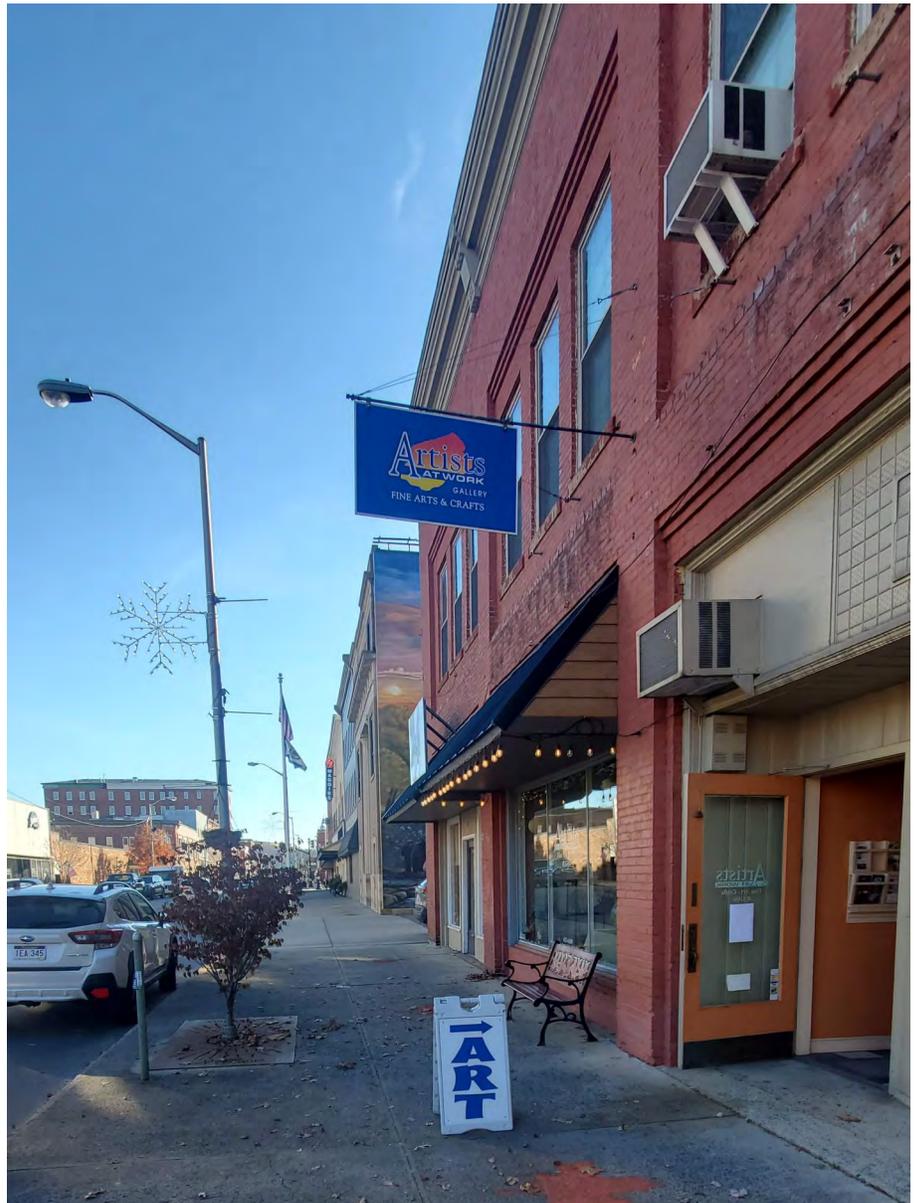
Elkins-Randolph County Chamber of Commerce

The mission of the Elkins-Randolph County Chamber of Commerce is to advocate, educate, and network on behalf of the business community while striving to be a positive, economic driver for the community. (Elkins-Randolph County Chamber of Commerce, 2024).   The chamber provides educational programs for businesses and organizations throughout the year, covering topics such as business promotion and marketing, and nonprofit support and workshops. Additionally, the Chamber hosts a leadership training session called Leadership Randolph (LR), focused on training 15 individuals over a nine-month period on a wide range of topics.

Tax Structure

Elkins property owners pay real-estate taxes imposed by the state, county, school system, and city. There is a local sales tax, in addition to the state sales tax. There is no local income tax. The total sales tax is 7%, with 6% attributable to state sales tax and 1% attributable to municipal sales tax. The authority to levy a municipal sales tax has been granted to Elkins under home rule. (Elkins Local Tax Structure, 2024).

Business and occupation (B&O) taxes are charged against a business's gross income, at various rates for different categories of business. If a business is licensed to operate in Elkins, the business must file business tax returns even for years in which there was no business income. Revenues from this tax are deposited into the city's general fund. (Elkins Business Licensing & Taxes, 2024).

Another category of tax charged to businesses in Elkins is hotel/motel tax. As permitted under state code, the City of Elkins charges hotel and motel operators a tax on the cost of each occupied room. As per city ordinance 180, approved September 4, 2014, the current rate charged is 6 percent. The tax is due and payable monthly, on or before the fifteenth day of the calendar month next succeeding the month in which the tax is accrued. The Treasurer's Department sends a year's worth of tax return forms to each hotel and motel operating within city limits before July 1 of each year. (Elkins Business Licensing & Taxes, 2024).

Fifty percent of the revenues from the hotel/motel tax are appropriated to the city's convention and visitor's bureau. The balance is used for the support of city parks and recreation facilities, beautification projects, and similar uses, as stipulated by West Virginia Code §7-18-14. (Elkins Business Licensing & Taxes, 2024).
A fire fee for both city residents and the first response area has also been established to help fund the Elkins Fire Department.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is a tool designed to encourage investment and development within a specific area, known as a TIF district. (Elkins Tax Increment Financing, 2024). By leveraging future increases in property tax revenues, the city can fund improvements without raising current tax rates. The additional tax revenue from rising property values is reinvested into public and private projects within the district. TIF stimulates economic growth, creates jobs, and enhances infrastructure—without adding burdens on taxpayers.

The establishment of a TIF district provides essential funding for community projects that enhance public services, infrastructure, and quality of life. This long-term investment benefits both the city and surrounding areas. (Elkins Tax Increment Financing, 2024).

Several key projects have been identified for development through TIF funds. These projects aim to enhance public infrastructure, revitalize the community, and support long-term growth:

1. Riverfront Development
2. Recreational Trail System
3. Downtown Streetscaping
4. Elkins Railyard Development
5. Randolph County Industrial Park

(Elkins Tax Increment Financing, 2024).

The TIF District was established in 2023 and includes approximately 437 acres of contiguous real property located in Elkins. A map of the TIF District boundaries is provided below. The TIF District is comprised of parts of the downtown business district, the Industrial Park managed by the Randolph County Development Authority, and the Elkins Railyard. The TIF District is generally bounded to the north by Seneca Trail, to the east by Randolph Avenue and Livingston Avenue, to the south by Georgetown Road and to the west by portions of Haddix Road and is bisected by the Tygart Valley River.

Needs Assessment

Some communities struggle to make progress on economic development because of failing or inadequate infrastructure, poor availability of medical care, lack of educational facilities, and insufficient cultural and arts attractions. In these categories, however, Elkins is either already strong or is in the process of taking concrete steps toward improvements. The presence of Davis Medical Center, the Randolph County Community Arts Center, Augusta Heritage Center—which recently moved and expanded, and the Old Brick Playhouse are just a few of the many reasons people live in Elkins. Education plays an important role in Elkins, supported by institutions such as Davis & Elkins College, the Randolph County Board of Education, the Randolph County Wood Technology Center, and the Kump Education Center, which together offer educational opportunities for learners of all ages.

Several different sectors comprise the local economy in Elkins. As Elkins is the county seat of Randolph County it enjoys many economic benefits that other similar cities do not. The physical location of the county courthouse and county administrative buildings brings people into downtown Elkins that may not have visited otherwise. Expanded outdoor recreation, including major trail systems, as well as the city's location at the gateway of the Monongahela National Forest have attracted many visitors for recreational tourism. The Mon Forest Towns and EAST are working to further develop the city's position as an outdoor recreation destination on the east coast. Additionally, Elkins' construction of a new water treatment plant with substantial excess capacity is a major bonus for recruiting businesses to the area.

Elkins is also home to the United States District Court-Northern District of West Virginia, Davis & Elkins College, United States National Forest Office, several medical facilities and numerous tourist attractions. All

these businesses bring people into the city. These people shop downtown, eat at restaurants, and stay at hotels. Social media promotions are utilized to promote grand openings of new businesses. Additionally, a downtown business owners group exists to help maintain and promote business in the area.

While Elkins has many economic assets, continued economic development was identified as a concern of many. Additionally, other major concerns include the aging population of the community, shrinking workforce, retention of young people in the greater Elkins area, lack of job opportunities, the limited availability of mental health and addiction services for community members, the limited availability of high-speed internet, and lack of affordable housing. Although there are not extensive flood zones inside Elkins city limits, flood risk would limit future new development in the Oak Grove neighborhood. Also, what would otherwise be prime commercial real estate along North Randolph near Corridor H is in a flood zone. There are extensive flood zones just outside city limits to the northwest, in Crystal Springs.

For purposes of this needs assessment, the concerns are centered among three different sectors: tourism and downtown revitalization, taxes, and annexation.

Tourism and Downtown Revitalization

The Randolph County Convention and Visitor's Bureau (CVB) promotes the City of Elkins as the heart of Randolph County. Tourism is a key economic driver in Randolph County and contributes greatly to the regional economy. Elkins CVB reported that in 2023, direct visitor spending to Randolph County was $79 million, supporting 902 jobs, and in 2024, direct visitor spending to Randolph County was $78.8 million, supporting 889 jobs. This data illustrates that tourism plays a major role in the economy in the County and therefore the City of Elkins.

The City of Elkins is truly the center of tourism in Randolph County. Attractions in Elkins include the Durbin and Greenbrier Valley Railroad (DGVR), Allegheny Highlands Trail, Augusta Heritage Center, the Mountain State Forest Festival, Monongahela National Forest, and The Gandy Dancer Dinner Theatre. The City of Elkins is also a certified arts community and was named one of the top 100 best art towns in America. According to the CVB the Welcome Center located in the train station had 23,571 visitors in 2024. The proposed Elkins Area Share Trails (EAST) project has significant potential for long term economic impact for Elkins and nearby communities.

While the City has much to offer in terms of tourism attractions, there is a consensus that Elkins needs to increase its promotion of its assets and reinvent the image of the city. Suggestions include promoting the city as an outdoor destination, Gateway to the Monongahela National Forest, or a ski and/or bike destination. Right now, the City of Elkins is lacking a "brand". Part of branding the City of Elkins would include the development of a slogan and logo. Previously managed by Main Street Elkins, the "Unexpectedly Cool" branding project currently lacks an organizational home following the group's closure. While a downtown business group exists (Envision Elkins), they have not taken on this branding initiative.

Many throughout the planning process feel that more should be done to attract visitors to downtown Elkins. Railroad Avenue around the Railyard Depot is not inviting and lacks simple pedestrian amenities that would encourage people to walk into the downtown. There is also a lack of signage downtown identifying where

shops, dining, and retail are located. To combat these issues, the City of Elkins has developed a Master Streetscape Plan to help revitalize downtown and assist in city beautification efforts.

The Master Streetscape Plan was also drafted to increase tourism. Additionally, many different organizations are working to increase tourism and economic development in Randolph County, including EAST, Mon Forest Towns, Ascend Greater Elkins Program, CVB, Envision Elkins, and the Randolph County Development Authority. However, local businesses may not be utilizing or communicating with these organizations to help with the promotion of their business. In addition, tourism planning is not integrated into everyday planning at the city government level. Members of the public are concerned that the city is simply not prepared for increased visitors and the impact they may have on the city.

The CVB expressed the need for the full implementation of the Streetscape Plan to assist in increasing tourism, including wayfinding signage, hanging baskets, and holiday lights. Additionally, they noted that designating an open container area for downtown and other tourism events would be beneficial. Their greatest concerns regarding tourism include dilapidated buildings in the downtown area, uneven sidewalks in the downtown area, vacant buildings or underutilized spaces downtown, and insufficient free parking for visitors and tour bus operators.

Annexation

The City of Elkins is mostly built out and therefore has little room for new development. Any new development would most likely occur in any vacant lots or in lots where buildings are demolished. The lack of new development limits Elkins' ability to receive more tax dollars from businesses. Additionally, many new businesses have been built right outside the City limits in the US 219 Corridor and the City receives no revenue from them. Annexation of these growth areas may help the city's finances as well as provide for

orderly planning of future growth in the region. Those that participated in the planning process support annexation. However, there are many residents and businesses that do not support annexation. Further, it is difficult, time-consuming, and very unpopular to annex property against property owners' will. The simplest path to annexation is when property owners request it themselves, but this requires businesses to voluntarily decide their own taxes. A public relations campaign on the benefits of annexation may help the City of Elkins in any future annexation efforts.

Goal #4- Provide opportunities for increased economic development

The 2015 plan identified 7 action steps to address economic development concerns, of which 3 have been implemented.

Action Step 1 (not implemented)- Annex surrounding lands to increase the tax base and potential development areas.

Legislative change in 2020 essentially eliminated option of "minor boundary adjustment" (i.e., involuntary annexation); donut hole owners are not willing to voluntarily be annexed. Outreach to individual Beverly Pike businesses is ongoing.

Action Step 2 (implemented)- Develop a public relations campaign on the benefits of annexation.

Action Step 3 (not implemented)- Publicize vacant properties to developers on City's website.

Action Step 4 (not implemented)- Develop a marketing and branding campaign to raise awareness of all that Elkins has to offer.
External marketing of the Elkins area to tourists is more properly handled by the Depot CVB.

Action Step 5 (not implemented)- Develop a signage plan identifying where shops, dining, and retail are located.
This can be found in the streetscape master plan.

Action Step 6 (implemented)- Develop a gateway to promote Elkins along major corridors.

Action Step 7 (implemented)- Determine whether the City Charter and administrative structure can be improved to support the continued success of the city and the implementation of the comprehensive plan.
The Charter was updated in 2021. The organizational structure was rearranged between 2020-2023.

Action Plan

Objective 1: Support the city's long-term growth and expansion while promoting economic vitality and reinvestment to enhance overall quality of life.

Action Step- Evaluate and pursue strategic annexation opportunities

The City of Elkins has limited opportunity for new development. The city needs new development to increase their tax base to be able to continue to provide high quality services to residents. Areas that the city would like to consider in the future for annexation are**:**

- Route 250S out towards Walmart
- Route 250 N out towards Corridor H
- Harrison Avenue (Wendy's area)
- Donut holes (non-city territory surrounded by city territory) along Wilson Lane.

Action Step- Explore methods to spearhead economic development in city limits

Addressing economic development at the city level has been noted as a concern. There is no longer a Main Street organization. Options the city should explore include a staff person dedicated to economic development and/or dedicated funding for economic development initiatives.

Action Step- Explore funding opportunities to maximize the value and impact of the TIF district

While the TIF district will provide an important funding source, it will not be sufficient on its own to fully implement the Riverfront Plan. Additional funding should be pursued through federal grant programs, with TIF revenues strategically leveraged as matching funds rather than relied upon as the sole source of financing.

Objective 2: Support partnerships, incentives, and outreach efforts that encourage community pride and participation.

Action Step- Explore resources to support property reinvestment

To strengthen the visual appeal and economic vitality of the downtown area, the City should evaluate the creation of a Property Improvement Incentive Program. This program could offer matching grants or low-interest loans to encourage private reinvestment, with priority given to projects that reinforce the historic character of downtown and contribute to a cohesive, high-quality streetscape.

Action Step- Provide ongoing support and recognition to organizations coordinating local events

Consider developing a communication strategy with the Randolph County CVB, Elkins Depot Welcome Center, Elkins-Randolph County Chamber and other event coordinators to promote events and tourism opportunities to residents and visitors.

Action Step- Explore a public education campaign to increase awareness and understanding of how local government functions

There is interest in creating a program to help citizens better understand the various levels of government. Potential components of this program could include:

- "Mayor of the Day"- educate students on what a mayor does
- "Mayor and Council Program"- educational sessions to showcase how government functions. Activities could include field trips to the county courthouse/municipal buildings, tour of police/fire departments, and attendance at council and/or county commission meetings.

Critical Issue #5
Land Use

Background

This chapter examines land use characteristics in the City of Elkins. The chapter includes an analysis of existing land use patterns and land use ordinances, historical resources, and beautification efforts.
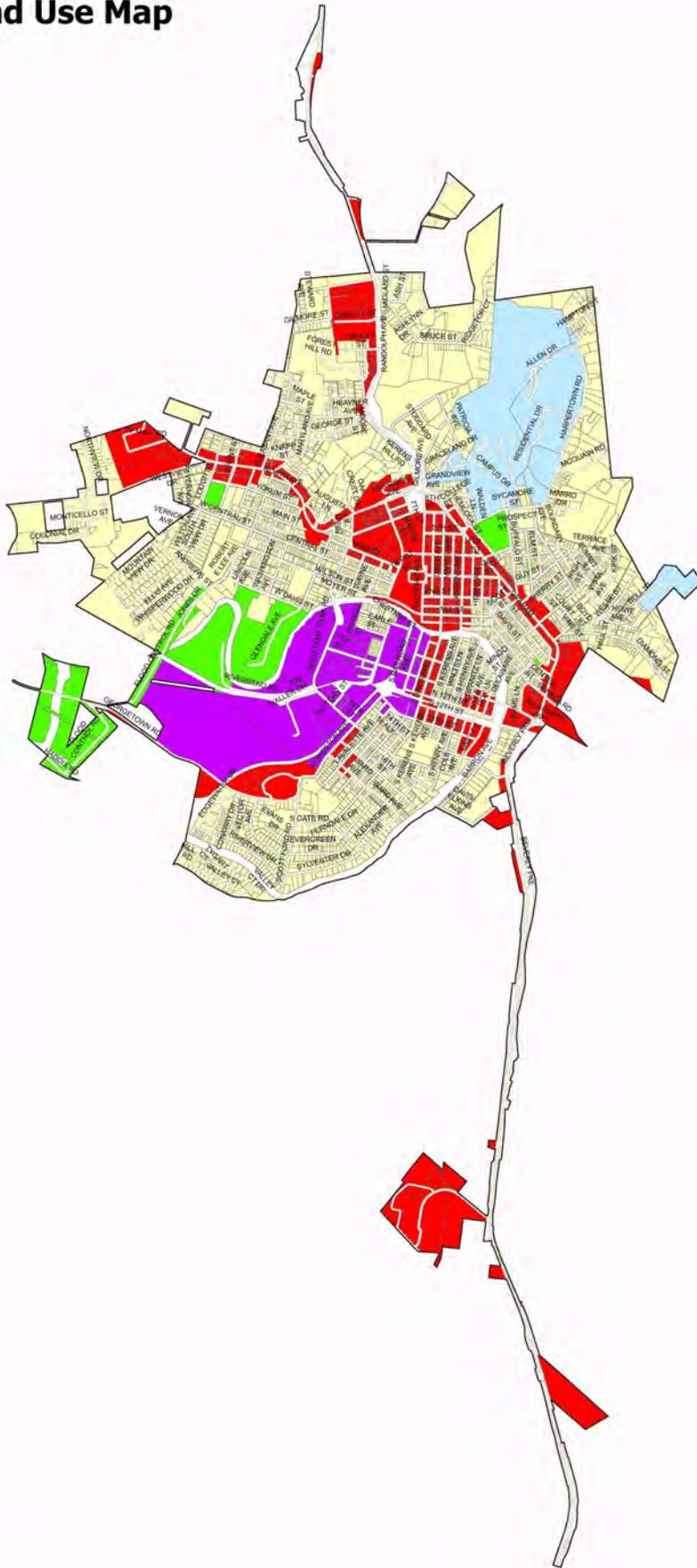
Land Use

Existing Land Use

The City of Elkins is mainly a residential community made up of various neighborhoods as illustrated on the **City of Elkins Existing Land Use Map**. The population density is 1923.5 people per square mile. Residential uses are primarily single-family, with small pockets of multi-family uses.   Commercial uses are in the downtown business district, Randolph Avenue, Rail Yard, and US 250. As Elkins is the county seat, many public uses are in the downtown business district (Court House, County Office Buildings, etc.). Industrial uses are primarily located in the Elkins Industrial Park.   Educational uses include Davis & Elkins College.

Recreational uses include Bluegrass Park, Davis Street Park, Elkins City Park, Glendale Park, Riverbend Park, and the Phil Gainer Community Center, as detailed in the table below.

| Park	Facilities
Bluegrass Park	Baseball field, small pavilion, playground area, basketball courts
Davis Street Park	Small playground, basketball court
Elkins City Park	Three pavilions, nine picnic sites, basket-ball court, eight horseshoe pits, large playground area
Glendale Park	Walking trail (connects to Riverbend Park), skateboard area, football practice field, soccer fields, four picnic sites, small pavilion, large open space for practices
Riverbend Park	Walking trail (connects to Glendale Park), lighted soccer field, three small soccer fields, three lighted Little League baseball fields, playground area, two volleyball courts, two pavilions, three picnic sites
Phil Gainer Community Center	Multipurpose room, meeting room, and kitchen

Floodplains within the city limits are discussed on page 51. There are no subsidence areas within the city limits.

City of Elkins
Existing Land Use Map

N

Legend

☐ Elkins Boundary
　 Roads
Existing Land Use
☐ Residential
■ Recreational
■ Educational
■ Commercial
■ Industrial

Source: WV GIS Tech Center, Region VII PDC

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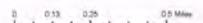
Regulations

The City of Elkins has enacted several land use regulations to protect the character of the City. Land use regulations include zoning, building code, floodplain ordinance, rental registration program, and vacant structure ordinance.

Zoning

The City of Elkins has enacted a zoning ordinance to regulate the use of land within municipal limits. The zoning ordinance consists of seven zoning districts and one overlay district:

- Single Family Residential
- City Residential
- Recreational
- Central Business
- Commercial
- Educational
- Industrial
- Telecommunications Overlay

The ordinance also establishes regulations for non-conforming uses, setbacks, height of buildings, parking, signs, landscaping, lighting, and storage.

Building Code

The city also requires a building permit when erecting, constructing, installing, repairing, altering, or enlarging any building or structure or any electrical wiring, gas system, or plumbing system.

Floodplain Ordinance

The city's floodplain ordinance establishes a floodplain district, which includes all land within the 100-year floodplain. The ordinance includes regulations regarding development in the floodplain, as well as design and construction standards. No development is permitted in the floodway that would result in any increase in the base flood elevation during the occurrence of the base flood discharge.

Historical Resources

The City of Elkins is rich in history. The city was developed by Senators Henry Davis and Stephen Elkins. The senators established the WV Central and Pittsburgh Railway, which ran through Elkins to haul timber and coal.   Both men built homes in Elkins, known as Halliehurst and Graceland, which are now part of Davis & Elkins College. Due to the presence of the railroad, the city boomed, and numerous people made their home in Elkins.

The Elkins Historic Landmarks Commission (EHLC) is charged with providing planning and technical assistance for the preservation of Elkins' historic sites. The Commission consists of five volunteer members. The EHLC has helped list several properties on the National Register of Historic Places, developed the Wees Historic District Neighborhood Plan, and helped with the placement of historical plaques on several buildings.

National Register Properties

The National Register of Historic Places is a national program that aims to protect historic resources throughout the United States. Listing in the Register is a voluntary process. To be listed in the Register an applicant must submit a nomination to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), which, along with the state's National Register Review Board, reviews the nomination. Several incentives are offered to properties listed in the Register, such as federal preservation grants, federal investment tax credits, preservation easements for nonprofits, International Building Code fire and life safety code alternatives, state tax benefits and state grant opportunities. Listing also entitles the district to assistance from the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation when a federal project may affect the district. Use, treatment, transfer, or disposition of private property is not affected by listing.

The City of Elkins is home to five historic districts. Downtown Elkins is classified as a historic district and includes 64 contributing structures. The Wees Historic District includes 286 contributing structures, and the Davis and Elkins Historic District includes six (6) contributing structures. The Elkins Children's Home is also a historic district. In 2021, the Graham-Davis Historic District was listed on the National Register. This district includes approximately 45 acres of residential development.

Individual properties listed on the National Register are:
- Graceland Mansion
- Halliehurst Mansion
- Liberal Arts Hall

- Albert Hall
- Davis Memorial Presbyterian Church
- The Warfield-Dye House
- Randolph County Courthouse
- Pinecrest
- Governor H.G. Kump House
- Baldwin-Chandlee Supply Company
- Riverside School
- Dr. John C. Irons House
- Taylor-Condrey House
- West Virginia Children's Home
- Elkins Milling Company
- First Ward School
- Scott Hill

The City of Elkins Historic Landmarks Commission is working on several projects, including:
- Development of a walking tour of the historic districts
- Printing and distributing Historic Design Pattern Book: Best Practices
- Hosting workshops on economic benefits of historic preservation and buildings

Beautification Efforts

The city has made great progress in beautifying the city since the adoption of the 2015 Comprehensive Plan. Projects the city and partners have completed include:

- Installation of green space with walking paths on Randolph Avenue
- Murals throughout downtown
- Replacement of trees downtown
- Seasonal decoration programs (fall scarecrows, Christmas gnomes, spring tulips, downtown flowers)
- Construction of Rotary Pavilion to host events and performances

Needs Assessment

Key areas of focus include evaluating zoning districts to prevent land use conflicts and enhancing recreational opportunities.

	Extremely Important	Very Important	Neutral/No Opinion	Somewhat Important	Not Important
Historic character and charm	37%	39%	8%	13.3%	3%
Outdoor recreational opportunities	47.3%	36.4%	6.1%	7.3%	3%
Parks and open spaces	60.1%	29.5%	4.9%	4.9%	0.6%
Access to walking/bike/ ski trails	48.8%	34.3%	6.6%	8.4%	1.8%
Protection of the river	60.6%	30.3%	4.9%	2.4%	1.8%

	Extremely concerned	Very concerned	Neutral/no opinion	Somewhat concerned	Not concerned
Preserving the city's historic character	23.5%	28.3%	16.9%	18.7%	12.7%
Maintenance of parks and public lands	24.7%	40.4%	13.9%	16.3%	16.3%

Recreation

The city operates and maintains several beautiful parks, which are true assets to the community. The city is also home to a YMCA that provides recreational facilities and programs. The existing parks in the city need improvements. Online survey respondents stated that outdoor recreational opportunities, parks and open spaces, and access to walking/bike/ski trails are extremely important and very important.

About 3.5 miles of the Tygart Valley River lies inside the borders of the city. The city should look for other opportunities to further increase the benefits that the river offers to both residents and visitors, as a location for recreation, tourism, and related activities. The Elkins Riverfront Plan, developed in 2022, proposes an urban and park trail along the Tygart Valley River. The plan also details several specific improvements to Glendale and Riverbend Parks.

The EAST (Elkins Area Shared Trails) Trail Master Plan, completed in 2023, details a trail system in Elkins and the surrounding area. The trail system would begin in downtown Elkins and travel past neighborhoods in the northern portion of the city and includes four specific areas:

- Davis Memorial Hospital Bike Park (1.5 miles)
- Glendale Park Skills Area (bike skills area)
- Davis and Elkins College (4.3 miles)
- Darby Farm Trails (5.9 miles)

In 2023, EAST became a collaborative project between EAST, Brad and Alys Smith Outdoor Economic Development Collaborative, the International Mountain Biking Association, and the US Forest Service. In 2024, EAST received a grant to begin Phase 1 of trail construction at the Davis and Elkins College. Funds were also received to begin construction of the Glendale Park Skills Area. The project will include a tot track, beginner pump track and beginner skills area. Construction on the trails at Davis and Elkins College were completed in the fall of 2025.

EAST is also looking to develop bike and hiking trails in the Monongahela National Forest. The project includes 15 miles of trails between the Stuart Recreation Area and Bickle Knob. Phase 1 of this project is now listed on the United States Forest Service Monongahela National Forest Schedule of Proposed Actions (SOPA).

Land Use Regulations

The city completed a comprehensive update to the zoning ordinance in 2022. The update was based upon the 2015 Comprehensive Plan. Since 2022 the following amendments have been made to the zoning ordinance:

- Amended maximum sign area for signs in the single family residential (R-1) and city residential (R-2) districts
- Permitting electronic message display signs as multi-tenant signs at shopping centers
- Frequency of BZA meetings
- Added definitions of museum, coworking space, conference center
- Added provisions for zoning of unzoned lands within city limits
- Removal of the use event, special

Moving forward, the planning commission recognizes the importance of enforcing the zoning ordinance while making revisions based on obstacles encountered.

In 2022, the Planning Commission developed, and city council subsequently adopted an amendment to the 2015 Comprehensive Plan. The amendment included an updated future land use map and land use classifications. Changes were made during the update process to the amended future land use map and classifications. Also still relevant is the following statement regarding telecommunication facilities from the 2014 Comprehensive Plan Amendment:

The development of telecommunication facilities is important to improve the quality of life, support economic development opportunities, and provide emergency services. However, the need for telecommunication facilities must be balanced with scenic viewsheds and residential development in the city. Careful consideration must take place when siting new facilities; such as collocation, concealment, and landscaping. Most of the city is built-out with compact residential and commercial development. Topography and existing facilities should be considered when determining locations for new telecommunication facilities. Placement of telecommunication facilities in or adjacent to residential areas and downtown should be avoided. If facilities are placed downtown, the facilities should be in industrial zoned areas.

As the city is urban in nature and does not have any lands that are classified as agriculture or conservation, rural lands were not identified on future land use map. The city plans to continue to grow with possible annexation areas and therefore will continue a more urban, built-out land use pattern. The city supports the preservation of agricultural lands and in the future would consider annexation of agricultural lands.

Future Land Use Classifications

The following future land use classifications are shown on the **City of Elkins Future Land Use Map:**

Single family residential- intended to provide for low density residential uses.

Residential- intended to provide for single-family and multi-family residential uses.

Central Business District- intended to provide for small-scale business uses to serve surrounding neighborhoods. Residential uses would allow for a mix of single family and multifamily uses, especially in the second story of commercial buildings.

Commercial- intended to provide for businesses that require larger buildings and would have more of an impact on surrounding uses.
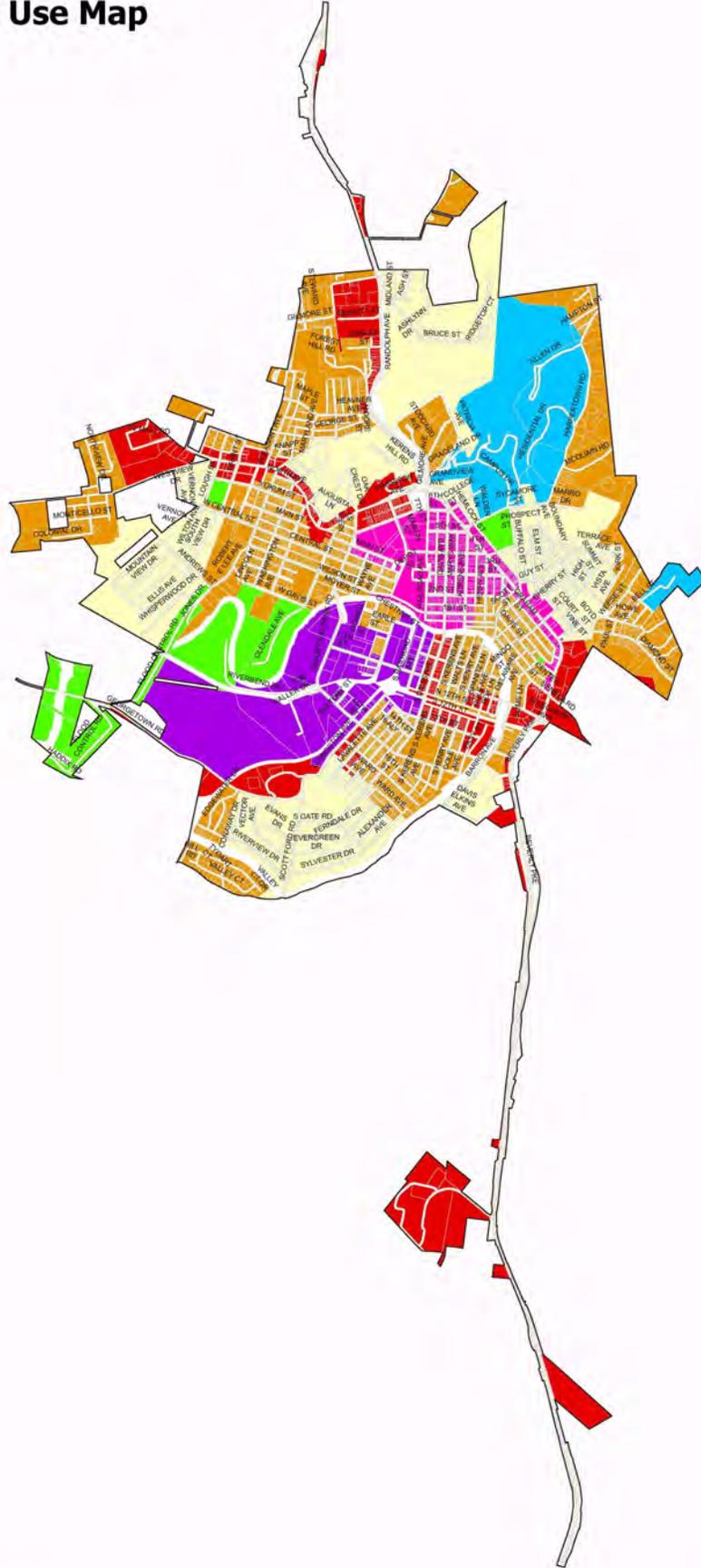
Educational- areas owned by Davis & Elkins College and Elkins Mountain School.

Recreational– areas intended for parks and recreation uses

Industrial- intent of this classification is to accommodate industrial uses.

City of Elkins
Future Land Use Map

N

Legend

Elkins Boundary
Roads

Future Land Use

Single Family Residential
City Residential
Central Business District
Commercial
Educational
Recreational
Industrial

0   0.13   0.25   0.5 Miles

This comprehensive plan update identified the following Preferred Development Areas for future development, as shown on the **Development and Renewal/Redevelopment Areas Map**:

Preferred development areas- Consistent with the land use component, identify areas where incentives may be used to encourage development, infill development or redevelopment in order to promote well designed and coordinated communities and prevent sprawl.

1. **Railyard**—The railyard is composed of approximately 20 acres with 2 lots left to be developed (following the completion of the Event & Conference Center), including a 2.45-acre lot located directly behind the Mon Health Heart and Vascular facility, and 2.4 acres in the southern end of the railyard

2. **Industrial Park Expansion Area**- This area is approximately 75 acres and is located next to the existing Elkins Industrial Park. The area is zoned industrial. Construction of an access road to the park is under development. The Randolph County Development Authority has not yet marketed the expansion since the park is still in the development phase. However, the RCDA has approved an agreement with a manufacturer for the purchase of 10 acres of land, with the option to purchase additional land as needed.

3. **Downtown Business District**- The downtown business district is zoned central business district which allows for a variety of commercial uses. The district contains a variety of buildings with ground-floor storefronts and underutilized upper floors.

4. **Heavner Avenue Property**- The West Virginia Children's Home on Heavner Avenue was closed by the state in 2024 due to aging infrastructure and high operating costs. The property consists of a historic building constructed in 1909 situated on a 17-acre parcel. While the building is currently vacant and remains under state ownership, the site presents significant potential for creative redevelopment.

5. **Harrison Avenue Corridor**- The Harrison Avenue Corridor includes several vacant commercial buildings and undeveloped parcels that are well suited for redevelopment. The corridor also contains abandoned and dilapidated structures that detract from the appearance of this primary gateway through the city.

6. **Wilson Lane**- This area includes 9 acres of vacant land located adjacent to existing commercial development. There is potential for new development in this area due to its location and size.

7. **First Street**- This area contains vacant lots left by demolished structures. Residential development is recommended as the preferred future use.

Five (5) renewal and/or redevelopment areas were identified on the **Development and Renewal/Redevelopment Areas Map**:

1. Residential neighborhood near the Industrial Park- This neighborhood contains abandoned and dilapidated homes adjacent to industrial uses and represents a transitional area with opportunities for reinvestment and redevelopment influenced by its proximity to these industrial properties.
2. Graham Historic District- Some areas within the district present opportunities for reinvestment to strengthen the historic character and support long-term preservation.
3. Diamond Street Area- This area contains dilapidated homes that are likely candidates for demolition, with potential for new construction to revitalize the neighborhood.
4. Neighborhood adjacent to Davis Medical Center- This neighborhood includes a mix of structures in varying states of disrepair. Targeted investment is needed to prevent further deterioration and keep buildings from becoming beyond repair.
5. Harpertown- This area includes a mix of well-maintained homes and properties in need of repair. Addressing maintenance challenges and unauthorized occupancy through targeted reinvestment could help stabilize and improve neighborhood conditions.

> Renewal and/or redevelopment-Consistent with the land use component, identify slums and other blighted areas and set goals, plans and programs for the elimination of such slums and blighted areas and for community renewal, revitalization and/or redevelopment.

As identified under **Critical Issue 4: Economic Development**, annexation is vital to the city's financial future. Most of Elkins is currently built-out and any new development will most likely be re-development. The priority annexation areas identified in the 2015 Comprehensive Plan are still relevant:

- Route 250 S out towards Walmart
- Route 250 N out towards Corridor H
- Harrison Avenue (Wendy's area)
- Donut holes (non-city territory surrounded by city territory) along Wilson Lane.

Preferred Development and Renewal/Redevelopment Areas
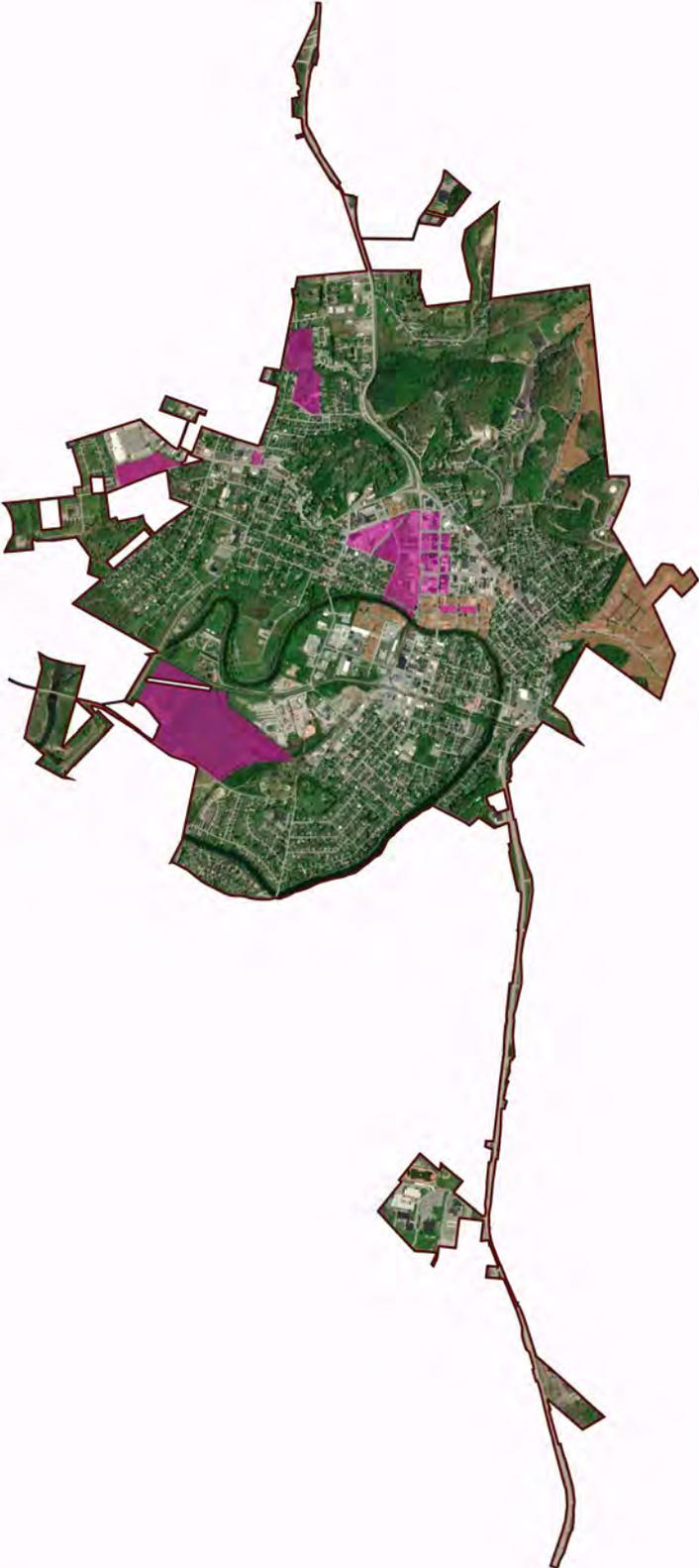
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Source: WV GIS Tech Center, Region VII PDC

0   0.15   0.3   0.6 Miles

Goal: Enhance and protect the characteristics of the city through proactive land use planning

The 2015 plan identified 4 action steps to address land use concerns, of which 2 have been implemented.

Action Step 1 (implemented)- Revise the zoning ordinance to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan

Action Step 2 (not implemented)- Complete a streetscape project to improve the aesthetics of the downtown business district
A streetscape plan has been completed. The city is awaiting funding opportunities to implement the plan.

Action Step 3 (implemented)- Provide art throughout the downtown (murals and community symbols).

Action Step 4 (not implemented)- Perform a feasibility study concerning possible improvements and better use of the river and riverfront
A Riverfront development Plan has been developed, the city is awaiting funding opportunities.

Action Plan

Objective 1: Respect the heritage of the city while balancing growth and development

Action Step- Consider zoning revisions to support evolving uses and boundary adjustments

The Planning Commission should evaluate the current permitted uses in the Industrial Zone to identify any that may be inappropriate for a true industrial area and ultimately create land use conflicts.

One approach could be to establish differentiated industrial zone classifications, applying one to areas with existing development and reserving the other for newly acquired or future development areas.

Other revisions to consider include creating a new zoning district to allow highway commercial uses, supporting economic development and guiding growth along major transportation corridors. Additionally, an overlay or new zoning district to allow limited commercial uses in traditional neighborhoods should be explored to encourage compatible infill development and future redevelopment

## Action Step: Collaborate with Historic Landmarks Commission (HLC) on resources and technical assistance

The city should coordinate with the HLC to identify available resources and provide technical assistance that supports preservation and rehabilitation efforts. Collaboration with the HLC can help property owners access funding opportunities.

Objective 2: Strengthen the city's recreational infrastructure by enhancing current parks and developing new trails to support outdoor activity, wellness, and community connectivity.

Action Step- Implement the Riverfront Master Plan

The Riverfront Master Plan consist of three phases:
- Phase One- Tygart Valley River- South (Davis Ave. Bridge to River Bend)
  > Boardwalk connection along Tygart
  > New sidewalk along Chestnut Street
  > Trail development through right of way and along rivers edge
  > Small footbridge crossing stream
  > Trail connection to River Bend Park
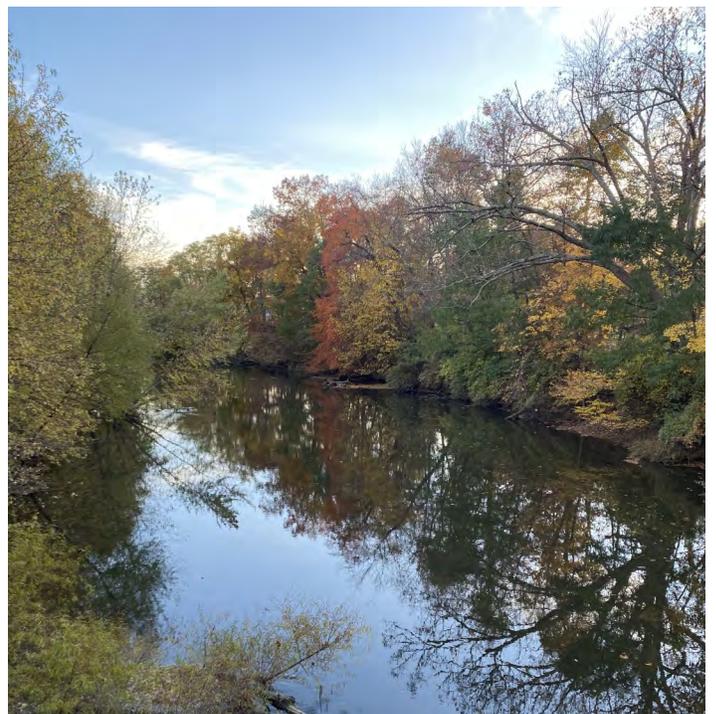
Total estimated cost- $550,000-$660,000
- Phase Two- Trail signage and wayfinding
  Total estimated cost- $40,000-$60,000
- Phase Three- Trail loops, launch, amenities, and sidewalk connections
  Sidewalk and intersection enhancements
  Development of riverfront park and trail along Wilson Street
  Boardwalk system on north side of Tygart
  Boat and kayak launch sites
  Neighborhood connections from Glendale Park
  Additional trail amenities within Glendale and River Bend Parks
  Pedestrian bridge crossing
  Total estimated cost- $1.8 million to $2.55 million

Action Step- Collaborate with Elkins Parks and Recreation Commission to improve parks and recreation

The city should work with the Elkins Parks and Recreation Commission to continue to enhance and invest in recreation opportunities. The city and commission would identify community needs for expanded recreation opportunities. The following improvements have been identified:
- River Bend Park- Upgrades to playground equipment are needed at River Bend Park. The Riverfront Master Plan details enhancements to the trail system at River Bend Park. The plan recommends play areas, additional exercise stations, and resting areas along the trail.
- Glendale Park- Improvements needed at Glendale Park include the addition of a dog park and upgrades

to playground equipment. The Riverfront Master Plan recommends a new trail within Glendale Park. The trail would traverse a wooded and wetland area for approximately ¼ of a mile. The trail would also provide additional fishing access. Additional trails are also recommended to connect the park and neighborhood, as well as the proposed boardwalk trail. Kayak access and boat launch points are also recommended.

- City Park- Upgrades to the playground equipment at City Park are needed, along with renovations to the main pavilion.

Action Step- Continue to support organizations that enhance recreational opportunities

Continue to maintain and strengthen partnerships with local organizations to support the improvement and expansion of recreational opportunities. Continued collaboration can help leverage resources, enhance programming, and improve facilities that promote active lifestyles and community engagement.

Objective 3: Continue to support the efforts of local organizations

Action Step: Partner with community organizations to host joint clean-up events

Various community groups across the county actively participate in clean-up efforts to improve local properties. The Randolph County Make It Shine group, for example, focuses on beautifying Elkins and surrounding areas through organized litter clean-up events. Over time, their work has expanded to include yard maintenance, river clean-ups, recycling initiatives, and public art projects. In recognition of their efforts, the group received the Clean County Award from the WV DEP in 2022.

The Elkins City Council's community cleanup initiative also contributes, with volunteers dedicating a spring weekend to removing trash downtown. Additionally, Davis and Elkins College student athletes take part in an annual clean-up day focused on the downtown Elkins area.

To build on these efforts, the city should collaborate with these organizations to host recurring clean-up events and consider launching a property maintenance contest to further encourage community-wide participation.

Critical Issue #6
Technology

Background

Smart city technology and the development of additional technology in the City of Elkins was identified as important during the planning process. As it is a newly recognized concern, it was not addressed with recommendations in the previous plan. Smart city technology and technological advancements in Elkins can improve the quality of operation of various areas, including transportation, public safety, public-government interactions, and internet or data storage capabilities. This chapter will explore types of smart city technologies, some forms of technology being implemented by Elkins, and what steps Elkins can take to improve smart city technology.

Smart City Technologies

Smart city technology can come in many forms and can encompass a wide variety of areas. Smart city technology is developed and implemented in a manner that is very specific to the needs of a particular city or town and is based on the needs and capabilities of the city or town to implement it.

Smart city technology can generally be implemented in transportation, public safety, government-citizen interactions, and internet or data storage. In the transportation sector, smart city technology can be used to assist in regulating traffic through the implementation of smart traffic lights. Smart traffic lights use sensors to determine congested roadways and alter the green-red period of the light to better filter the traffic. In the public safety sector, smart city technology can be used in camera systems and sensors. For example, cameras can be installed to track motor vehicle violations in the city. Sensors may be implemented to track roadways and sidewalks during the wintertime to determine if salt is needed to clear ice.

Government-citizen interactions can also be furthered with smart city technology by creating and operating interactive websites and online forums to provide easier access for the citizens. Data storage can be strengthened with smart city technology to store city documents and provide better accessibility and searchability for these documents.

Smart city technology can also improve energy efficiency through self-dimming or LED bulbs in city buildings and infrastructure. Many other industries, some of which are also identified in this comprehensive plan, can benefit from the wide-ranging capabilities of smart city technology.

Cyber security can be improved through the implementation of new data protection systems. In 2024, the City adopted a comprehensive cybersecurity framework to better protect its networks, systems, and information assets from internal and external threats. The policy establishes clear governance, shared responsibilities, and layered controls, including access management, data classification, encryption, monitoring, training, and incident response, to safeguard critical infrastructure and protect personally identifiable information.

Elkins Smart City Technology

Elkins has begun implementing some forms of Smart City technology throughout the city. Camera systems are currently being installed to aid in the investigation of crimes. Further, IT systems are being upgraded in the city to assist with better data storage and access. Elkins is also transitioning data to the cloud through the implementation of smart city technology to provide better accessibility to the data.

Needs Assessment

The needs assessment considers input from the planning commission, the city council, and other stakeholders.

Transportation

Elkins can add technology into a variety of sectors within the city. For example, smart city technology can be adopted into the transportation sector to assist Elkins in controlling traffic lights in a more efficient manner, tracking road conditions during winter months, and protecting pedestrians with cameras and smart crosswalks.

City Infrastructure

Updating the city's technology can improve internet efficiency within the city government and the downtown area of the city. Further, this can assist in storing, accessing, and retaining data within the city in a better manner. Public access to the city's website and the usability of the website, such as providing electronic options for submitting city required permits and paying different city charges, can be improved with smart city technology.

Public Safety

Elkins can implement city cameras to investigate accidents, crimes and similar incidents. Cameras can also be implemented to deter motor vehicle violations and protect the people of Elkins on and off the roadways.

Goal: Use technology to increase organizational efficiency and strengthen service delivery

Action Plan

Objective 1: Modernize public-facing processes to improve efficiency and create a more user-friendly customer experience.

Action Step- Improve the city website

Areas on the city's website can be improved to increase accessibility. Online portals can be used for city permitting, city-related payments, and other common resident needs. Smart city technology can also be implemented on the website to increase accessibility for disabled persons using the website.

Action Step- Develop more accessible processes for public

The city should begin to improve the accessibility of public information to the residents. Accessibility may be increased by expanding virtual access to documents in the city's records that are available to the public.

Objective 2: Seek opportunities to deploy "smart city" technology with flexibility for future needs and growth.

Action Step- Explore smart city technology to improve delivery of city services

The city should actively explore smart city technology in a variety of sectors to account for future needs and growth of the city. This includes implementing technology that can be adapted to changes in the city's infrastructure or the development of new programs, systems, or industries in the city. This should account for public safety and health, transportation changes, and non-technological city improvements, among other potential needs.

Objective 3: Modernize data storage and access as basis for planning and decision making.

Action Step- Improve the city's data storage

The city can expand its use of the cloud to provide greater storage capabilities and public access to the city's public information. Consideration should be given to how the public's data will be protected. The city should ensure protection of public and private data by safeguarding the city's digital resources.

Implementation

Background

Implementation of a comprehensive plan is often difficult, time-consuming, and can be costly to a community. However, it is very important that the plan be used in everyday government functions so that it doesn't simply sit on the shelf and collect dust. The city should use the plan when preparing budgets and planning for future projects. The city should also work with potential partners on the implementation of projects detailed in the plan. Grant funding sources are available, and the comprehensive plan can be leveraged to strengthen and justify grant funding requests.

Regional Planning

Intergovernmental cooperation is essential in land use planning. Land use issues do not simply stop at municipal boundaries. The city currently works with the Randolph County Development Authority (Elkins mayors are typically de facto ex oficio members of the board of directors) and the Randolph County Housing Authority on issues of mutual interest. City and county staff also exchange information related to mapping and addressing, emergency response, floodplain management, source water protection, and related issues. However, both the city and county would benefit from a further strengthened relationship and should explore additional opportunities to work together to implement projects and realize solutions that would benefit everyone in the region.

The city is also a member of the State of the Corridor group, a coalition of communities located along Corridor H. This group hosts annual informational meetings that bring together cities and government representatives from across the Corridor H region. In addition, the city collaborates closely with the Regional VII Planning and Development Council, which has provided valuable assistance on numerous local projects.

Financial Implications

Many of the projects detailed in the Action Plan will be costly for the City of Elkins to implement. However, there are many other funding sources the city should consider when budgeting for implementation. **Appendix 3** includes a list of funding opportunities that should be considered when implementing the plan.

Implementation Matrix

An implementation matrix is included at the end of this chapter and details the priority of each action step, recommended partners and potential funding sources.

Considering the city's current financial situation, it is essential to establish clear priorities. While many action steps are important, limited funding and staff capacity mean that only a few can be implemented at any given time. Each action step has therefore been classified as high, medium, or low priority. High-priority actions are those identified by the Planning Commission as the most critical to implement.

A timeframe has also been assigned to each action step. Although some projects are high priority, their implementation may take longer due to funding or resource limitations. Immediate projects are intended to

be completed within one year, mid-term projects within five years, and long-term projects may take up to ten years to implement.

Recommended partners play a critical role in the successful implementation of the plan. To begin implementation and promote coordination, the Planning Commission should convene a meeting with community groups and City Council to ensure a shared understanding of goals, roles, and expectations. Following adoption by City Council, the Planning Commission should use the implementation matrix to guide immediate action and advance the plan's objectives. The implementation matrix is intended to serve as a practical tool to support progress and prevent the plan from remaining unused. The Planning Commission should also conduct an annual review of the plan to assess the status of each project and identify any challenges to implementation.

Recommendation	Priority	Timeframe	Reference page #	Responsible Party	Recommended Partners	Funding Sources
Goal 1: Further strengthen public safety services to meet the needs of existing and future residents and businesses.						
Coordinate with Randolph County to expand public safety services upon completion of Corridor H	Ongoing	Long-term	14	City of Elkins	Randolph County Sherrif's Office, Randolph County EMS, VFDs	Staff time
Establish a detective division within the police department	Medium	Mid-term	14	City of Elkins	N/A	General fund
Ensure the fire department is fully equipped and supported	High	Immediate	15	City of Elkins	N/A	General fund, grants
Consider the feasibility of a strategically located public safety substation	Ongoing	Long-term	15	City of Elkins	N/A	General fund, grants
Explore partnerships with Randolph County regarding fire services	Low	Long-term	15	City of Elkins	Randolph County, other VFDs	Staff time
Continue the Regional Task Force on Addiction, Homelessness, and Mental Health	Ongoing	Immediate	15	City of Elkins	Randolph County Board of Education, Davis Health System	Dependent on size/scope of project
Goal 2: Meet the housing needs of current residents of all economic levels, while exploring options for future expansion.						
Prioritize funding for demolition of dilapidated buildings	Ongoing	Immediate	23	City of Elkins	N/A	General fund, grants
Embrace creative partnerships to address unsafe structures and enable the development of high-quality, affordable housing	Ongoing	Immediate	23	City of Elkins	HomeOwnership Center	General fund
Ensure code requirements for landlords are readily accessible	High	Mid-term	23	City of Elkins	N/A	Staff time
Explore opportunities to support homeownership	High	Immediate	23	City of Elkins	Woodlands Development and Lending, HomeOwnership Center	General fund
Explore loan programs that support property owners in making property maintenance and repair improvements	Medium	Mid-term	23	City of Elkins	HomeOwnership Center	Staff time

Recommendation	Priority	Timeframe	Reference page #	Responsible Party	Recommended Partners	Funding Sources
Goal 3: Upgrade infrastructure to meet current needs while preparing for future growth						
Expand public water and sewer to underserved areas	Ongoing	Long-term	36	City of Elkins	N/A	Dependent on size/scope of project
Continue to improve the city's water and sewer system	Ongoing	Long-term	36	City of Elkins	N/A	Dependent on size/scope of project
Consider a stormwater utility fee	Medium	Mid-term	36	City of Elkins	N/A	Staff time
Consider a stormwater ordinance	High	Mid-term	36	City of Elkins	N/A	Staff time
Update the GIS mapping system	Ongoing	Long-term	37	City of Elkins	Region VII Planning and Development Council	Staff time
Implement the Streetscape Master Plan	High	Mid-term	37	City of Elkins	N/A	Dependent on size/scope of project
Install wayfinding signage	High	Immediate	37	City of Elkins	N/A	Dependent on size/scope of project
Collaborate with WV DOT to create safe and cohesive transportation network	Ongoing	Mid-term	37	City of Elkins	WV DOT	Staff time
Consider various approaches for developing and maintaining sidewalks throughout the city	High	Immediate	38	City of Elkins	N/A	Dependent on size/scope of project
Continue to encourage bicycle friendly amenities	Ongoing	Mid-term	38	City of Elkins	WV DOT	Dependent on size/scope of project
Goal 4: Provide opportunities for increased economic development						
Evaluate and pursue strategic annexation opportunities	High	Mid-term	55	City of Elkins	N/A	Staff time
Explore methods to spearhead economic development in city limits	Medium	Mid-term	55	City of Elkins	N/A	Staff time
Explore funding opportunities to maximize the value and impact of the TIF district	Ongoing	Immediate	56	City of Elkins	N/A	Staff time
Explore resources to support property reinvestment	Medium	Mid-term	56	City of Elkins	N/A	Staff time
Provide ongoing support and recognition to organizations coordinating local events	Ongoing	Immediate	56	City of Elkins	Randolph County CVB, Elkins Depot Welcome Center, Elkins-Randolph County Chamber	Staff time
Explore a public education campaign to increase awareness and understanding of how local government functions	Ongoing	Immediate	56	City of Elkins	N/A	Staff time

| Recommendation	Priority	Timeframe	Reference page #	Responsible Party	Recommended Partners	Funding Sources
Goal 5: Enhance and protect the characteristics of the city through proactive land use planning						
Consider zoning revisions to support evolving uses and boundary adjustments	Medium	Mid-term	73	City of Elkins	WVU Land Use Clinic	Dependent on size/scope of project
Action Step: Collaborate with Historic Landmarks Commission (HLC) on resources and technical assistance	Ongoing	Immediate	73	City of Elkins	HLC	Dependent on size/scope of project
Implement the Riverfront Master Plan	Ongoing	Immediate	73	City of Elkins	N/A	Dependent on size/scope of project
Collaborate with Elkins Parks and Recreation Commission to improve parks and recreation	Ongoing	Immediate	74	City of Elkins	Elkins Park and Recreation Commission	Dependent on size/scope of project
Continue to support organizations that enhance recreational opportunities	Ongoing	Immediate	75	City of Elkins	Elkins Area Shared Trails (EAST)	Staff time
Partner with community organizations to host joint clean-up events	Ongoing	Immediate	75	City of Elkins	Randolph County Make It Shine, Davis and Elkins College	Staff time
Goal 6: Use technology to increase organizational efficiency and strengthen service delivery						
Improve the city website	Ongoing	Immediate	79	City of Elkins	N/A	Dependent on size/scope of project
Develop more accessible processes for public	Ongoing	Immediate	79	City of Elkins	N/A	Dependent on size/scope of project
Explore smart city technology to improve delivery of city services	Low	Long-term	79	City of Elkins	N/A	Staff time
Improve the city's data storage	Ongoing	Immediate	79	City of Elkins	N/A	Dependent on size/scope of project

Appendix 1

Pursuant to the requirements of W. Va. Code § 8A-3-6(c), the Planning Commission of the City of Elkins, West Virginia ("City of Elkins Planning Commission") hereby adopts the following procedures to encourage and promote public participation in the drafting of the City of Elkins Comprehensive Plan ("comprehensive plan"). The comprehensive plan is being drafted pursuant to W. Va. Code § 8A-1-1.

(1) The City of Elkins Planning Commission will request input from other affected governing bodies and units of governments that may be affected by the adoption of the comprehensive plan.

(2) Under W. Va. Code § 8A-3-6(b), once the City of Elkins Planning Commission has completed a draft of the comprehensive plan, and before the City of Elkins Planning Commission submits a plan to the City Council for adoption or consent, it must publicize and hold a public hearing on the draft of its plan.

    a. More particularly, under W. Va. Code § 8A-3-6(b), at least thirty (30) days prior to the date set for the public hearing, the Planning Commission will publish a notice of the date, time, and place of the public hearing as a Class I legal advertisement in compliance with the provisions of article three, chapter fifty-nine of the West Virginia Code. The notice shall run in a general circulating publication, the publication area will be the area that will be covered by the comprehensive plan.

    b. In addition to the requirements at W. Va. Code § 8A-3-6(b), above, the City of Elkins Planning Commission will publish its draft of the comprehensive plan at least thirty (30) days prior to the public hearing. Specifically, the Planning Commission will post hardcopies for public review at City Hall and the draft will be available online at the City of Elkins website: www.cityofelkinswv.com.

(3) Public notice of the City of Elkins Planning Commission meetings will be given pursuant to the West Virginia Open Governmental Proceedings Act, where applicable.

(4) No provision herein shall be construed as limiting the City of Elkins Planning Commission's ability to engage in additional public participation efforts as the City of Elkins Planning Commission deems appropriate. No provision herein shall prohibit the City of Elkins Planning Commission from amending these procedures.
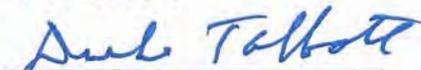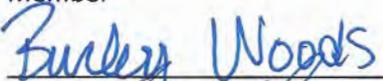
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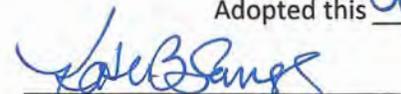
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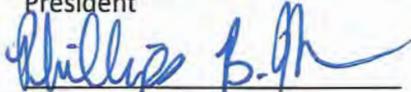
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Appendix 2: Funding Sources

The following information regarding funding sources was obtained from various federal, state, and non-profit websites. Each website has additional information and application forms. The following list is not a comprehensive list but a summary of grants and/or loans that are most commonly awarded in West Virginia.

Appalachian Regional Commission

The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) provides federal grant funds for the support of economic and community development in West Virginia. The goal of ARC is to create opportunities for self-sustaining economic development and improved quality of life.

Projects approved for ARC assistance must support one of the five general goals:
1. Invest in entrepreneurial and business development strategies that strengthen Appalachia's economy.
2. Increase the education, knowledge, skills, and health of residents to work and succeed in Appalachia.
3. Invest in critical infrastructure – especially broadband, transportation, including the Appalachian Development Highway System; and water/wastewater systems.
4. Strengthen Appalachia's community and economic development potential by leveraging the Region's natural and cultural heritage assets.
5. Build the capacity and skills of current and next-generation leaders and organizations to innovate, collaborate, and advance community and economic development.

Project activities include infrastructure projects (water, wastewater, broadband, workforce development, entrepreneurial and business development, and local leadership and community capacity building)

Benedum Foundation

The mission of the Benedum Foundation is to encourage human development in West Virginia and Southwestern Pennsylvania through strategically placed charitable resources. The foundation awards grants in education, economic development, community development and health and human services in West Virginia.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

The West Virginia Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) provides grants to local governments (towns, cities, and counties) that do not receive CDBG direct funding from U.S.

Department of Housing and Urban Development. The primary objective of CDBG funding is to develop sustainable communities by providing decent housing, a suitable living environment, and expanded economic opportunities principally for persons of low to moderate income.

Community Facilities Direct Loan & Grant Program (USDA)

This program provides affordable funding (low interest loans, grants, or a combination of the two) to develop essential community facilities in rural areas. An essential community facility is defined as a facility that provides an essential service to the local community for the orderly development of the community in a primarily rural area, and does not include private, commercial or business undertakings.

Funds can be used to purchase, construct, and / or improve essential community facilities, purchase equipment and pay related project expenses. Examples of essential community facilities include:

- Health care facilities such as hospitals, medical clinics, dental clinics, nursing homes or assisted living facilities
- Public facilities such as town halls, courthouses, airport hangars or street improvements
- Community support services such as child care centers, community centers, fairgrounds or transitional housing
- Public safety services such as fire departments, police stations, prisons, police vehicles, fire trucks, public works vehicles or equipment
- Educational services such as museums, libraries or private schools
- Utility services such as telemedicine or distance learning equipment
- Local food systems such as community gardens, food pantries, community kitchens, food banks, food hubs or greenhouses

Land and Water Conservation Fund (WV Department of Commerce)

The Land and Water Conservation Fund program (LWCF) provides supplemental federal funding for the acquisition and/or development of high-quality, public outdoor recreational areas throughout West Virginia. Assisted or acquired parklands are bound by perpetual restrictive covenants that obligate the project sponsor to operate and maintain the defined project area as a public outdoor recreational facility.

Proposed projects must be consistent with the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). Park renovations, expansions to promote active lifestyles, innovate community cores, attract or retain visitors to an area, develop trailheads or preserve other natural areas to impact community health objectives or develop brownfields renewal efforts will receive funding priority. Additional priority will be made for projects targeting one or more of the

project characteristics noted above that utilize a community coalition or consortium approach towards achieving the project goal. Project consortiums can include, but not be limited to, participation in the West Virginia Development Office's Main Street Program, Certified Development Community Program, or other programs of the Governor's Office of Healthy Lifestyles, West Virginia Department of Highways, or Northern or Southern West Virginia Brownfields Assistance Centers.

Eligible activities:

- Land acquisition for parklands
- Development or renovation of the following types of outdoor recreational facilities:
- Campgrounds
- Picnic areas
- Sports and playfields
- Golf courses
- Swimming facilities
- Boating facilities
- Fishing facilities
- Hunting areas
- Trails
- Winter sport facilities
- Support facilities (walks, utilities, bathrooms, etc.)
- Amphitheaters
- Lake impoundments
- Visitor information centers
- Interpretive centers

Rails to Trails Conservancy

The Trail Grants Program emphasizes strategic investments that support significant regional and community trail development goals. The program supports organizations and projects that will create more opportunities for people to connect with trails in their neighborhoods—either through activities and events, or through improved, connected trail infrastructure.

Recreational Trails Fund Program (WV DOT)

The Recreational Trails Program is available for the construction, upgrade or maintenance of both motorized and non-motorized recreational trails. This is an 80% federal, 20% local reimbursement program that may recognize "in-kind" matches for the local share.

Recycling and Litter Program Grants (WV DEP)

Recycling Assistance Grant Program

The funds are available to any county, municipality, the public or private entity in West Virginia that is interested in planning and implementing recycling programs, related public educational programs or need assistance in recycling market efforts.

Litter Control Grant Program

The Litter Control Grant is a matching fund that assists municipalities and county government agencies with community cleanup and litter enforcement projects.

Covered Electronic Devices Grant Program

Grants that are used for the purpose of conducting electronic collection events and programs. Only municipalities, county commissions or county solid waste authorities are eligible to apply for these grants.

Rural Community Development Initiative Grants (USDA)

RCDI grants are awarded to help non-profit housing and community development organizations, low-income rural communities and federally recognized tribes support housing, community facilities and community and economic development projects in rural areas.

Rural Placemaking Innovation Challenge (USDA)

The Rural Placemaking Innovation Challenge (RPIC) is for eligible entities to help provide planning support, technical assistance and training to foster placemaking activities in rural communities.

Qualified entities can use the funds to help rural communities create plans to enhance capacity for broadband access; preserve cultural and historic structures; and support the development of transportation, housing, and recreational spaces.

State Historic Preservation Office Grants (WV Department of Arts, Culture & History)

The State Development Grant Program is for rehabilitation of properties that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places or a contributing property in a historic district or/and archaeological development of a site listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Survey & Planning Grant Program is for conducting architectural/archaeological surveys, National Register nominations, predevelopment plans, heritage education projects, etc.

The Endangered Historic Properties Fund Program is to provide emergency funding through a grant for the preservation of threatened and endangered historic and prehistoric structures and sites.

Transportation Alternatives Program (WV DOT)

The Transportation Alternatives (TA) is a funding source for local community development. This is an 80% federal, 20% local reimbursement grant program for non-traditional transportation related projects. Examples include railway depot restoration, pedestrian and bicycle facilities and rail trails. This and other grant programs have also become part of West Virginia's Federal-aid transportation program since passage of the original ISTEA in 1991.

Water & Waste Disposal Loan & Grant Program (USDA)

This program provides funding for clean and reliable drinking water systems, sanitary sewage disposal, sanitary solid waste disposal, and storm water drainage to households and businesses in eligible rural areas.

Funds may be used to finance the acquisition, construction or improvement of:
- Drinking water sourcing, treatment, storage and distribution
- Sewer collection, transmission, treatment and disposal
- Solid waste collection, disposal and closure
- Storm water collection, transmission and disposal

In some cases, funding may also be available for related activities such as:
- Legal and engineering fees
- Land acquisition, water and land rights, permits and equipment
- Start-up operations and maintenance
- Interest incurred during construction
- Purchase of facilities to improve service or prevent loss of service
- Other costs determined to be necessary for completion of the project

Youth Engagement through Public Art Grant (WV Department of Arts, Culture & History)

Provides up to $5,000 in support for public art projects that engage local youth in the planning and/or implementation of the project. Eligible organizations include West Virginia 501(c)(3) youth or arts organizations, schools, and local governments.

Appendix 3-Sources

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Appendix 4:
Adoption Materials

To be added after comprehensive plan is adopted